DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 475 701 CE 084 874

AUTHOR	Chappell, Clive; Johnston, Robyn
TITLE	Changing Work: Changing Roles for Vocational Education and Training Teachers and Trainers.
INSTITUTION	National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Leabrook (Australia).
ISBN	ISBN-1-74096-140-4
PUB DATE	2003-00-00
NOTE	65p.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 252 Kensington Road, Leabrook, South Australia 5068, Australia (Cat. no. 936; $27.50 Australian). Tel: 08 8333 8400; Fax: 08 8331 9211; e-mail: vet_req@ncver.edu.au; Web site: http://www.ncver.edu.au. For full text: http://www.ncver.edu.au/research/proj/nr0006.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS
DESCRIPTORS	Adjustment (to Environment); Adult Education; Biographies; Community Education; Comparative Analysis; Educational Change; Educational Environment; Educational Finance; Educational Trends; Employment Patterns; English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; Interviews; Literature Reviews; Occupational Surveys; Postsecondary Education; Private Sector; Public Sector; Questionnaires; Role of Education; School Business Relationship; Secondary Education; *Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Role; Teacher Student Relationship; Teacher Surveys; Teaching (Occupation); Teaching Conditions; *Trainers; Trend Analysis; *Vocational Education; *Vocational Education Teachers; *Work Environment
IDENTIFIERS	*Australia; Impact Studies; Shared Values; TAFE (Australia); Trainer Role

ABSTRACT

The effects that recent changes in Australia's vocational education and training (VET) system over the past decade have had on VET practitioners were examined. Interviews were conducted with 28 VET teachers working at a variety of sites across Australia, including technical and further education, adult and community education, private colleges, industry, and schools. The interviews established that the competitive VET market has invoked new roles for VET practitioners that are not only additional to the traditional "teaching" role but are also substantially different from it in terms of focus, purpose, and practice. Those VET practitioners who were involved in commercially focused activities spoke of having to negotiate their way through often-contradictory structures and modes of practice inherent in public sector operations. Their colleagues who were less involved in commercial VET activities were also confronted with new business discourses that contradicted their understanding of VET as both a broad educational activity and public good. The educational identity of most of the VET practitioners interviewed remained strong. Most shared a view of their work that places great importance on the teaching-learning relationship and on the educational norms, values, and modes of conduct underpinning that relationship. (The bibliography lists 39 references. The interview schedule and biographies of all 28 interviewees are appended.) (MN)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

NCVER

ED 475 701

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S. Hayman

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Changing work

Changing roles for vocational education and training teachers and trainers

Clive Chappell

Robyn Johnston

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CE084874

Changing work

Changing roles for vocational education and training teachers and trainers

Clive Chappell

Robyn Johnston

NCVER

Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge the work of Bernice Melville for her work in developing the biographies. We also appreciate the assistance of Roger Morris, Michele Simons, Patricia Ward and Brian Delahaye in this project.

© **Australian National Training Authority, 2003**

This work has been produced by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) with the assistance of funding provided by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). It is published by NCVER under licence from ANTA. Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part of this publication may be reported by any process without the written permission of NCVER Ltd. Requests should be made in writing to NCVER Ltd.

The views and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author/project team and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian National Training Authority.

ISBN 1 74096 140 4 print edition
1 74096 141 2 web edition
TD/TNC 73.10

Published by NCVER
ABN 87 007 967 311

252 Kensington Road, Leabrook, SA 5068
PO Box 115, Kensington Park, SA 5068, Australia
http://www.ncver.edu.au

Contents

Executive summary 4

Background 6

- Introduction to 'new vocationalism' 6
- VET system change 7
- Who is the new VET practitioner? 8
- Employment in the VET sector 9
- Changing cultures 10

The project 12

- Research questions 12
- Methodology 12

Data analysis and discussion 14

- Biography analysis 14
- Interview analysis 16
- Summary 24

Findings 25

- Themes emerging from the analysis 25
- Research questions 25
- Summary 29

References 30

Appendix 1: Interviews 32

Appendix 2: Biographies 34

Executive summary

In light of the many changes that have occurred in the Australian vocational education and training (VET) system over the last decade or more, this study set out to gain insights into the ways in which these changes have influenced the construction of VET practitioners' identity at work. The study undertook a series of interviews with 28 VET practitioners working in a variety of sites, including technical and further education (TAFE), adult and community education (ACE), private colleges, industry and schools, and analysed the ways in which they constructed their roles at work.

Research questions

This research aims to find answers to the following key questions.

- How do different groups of VET practitioners conceptualise their role in vocational education and training?
- What site-specific cultural norms influence the construction of these roles?
- Are there shared norms, values and modes of conduct common to all groups of VET practitioners?
- What site-specific factors hinder the creation of a common culture shared by VET practitioners?

Methodology

The methodology used in this research consists of an analysis of selected literature relating to VET system change and what this literature says about the changing nature of VET work. It also draws on a wider body of literature relating to economic reform and labour market change. This initial analysis provides the context for subsequent empirical data analysis.

The second phase of the research involves the collection and analysis of interview data from 28 VET practitioners working in a range of VET sites throughout Australia.

The major themes that emerged from this analysis included:

- talk of change
- commercialisation
- administrative work
- educational identity
- industry identity

The results of this analysis were also used to produce a short career biography of each participant. The data were then used to inform the major research questions posed by this study; in particular, it was used to identify the points of commonality and difference between VET practitioners working in different sites of practice. It also indicated the tensions that surround contemporary practice in

vocational education and training, specifically attempting to identify the ways in which cultural differences in the various sites where VET practitioners work influences their understanding of their role in education and training.

However, it should be acknowledged that the comments of 28 practitioners cannot be extrapolated to make generalisations about the entire vocational education and training workforce. This small number of respondents is obviously a limitation of the study.

Major findings

The interviews reveal working lives that are highly varied, with the vast majority of respondents experiencing two or more career changes. The interviews also suggest that the most common entry into vocational education and training is through part-time teaching in TAFE.

The competitive VET market has invoked new roles for these VET practitioners that are not only additional to the traditional 'teaching' role but are also substantially different in terms of focus, purpose and practice. Moreover, examples of these new roles can be found in all of the sites investigated in this research. The competitive market has also encouraged the emergence of new VET practitioners who operate as VET consultants and who earn their living by entering into commercial contracts with particular organisations and enterprises.

Public sector practitioners involved in commercially focussed activities speak of having to negotiate their way through often contradictory structures and modes of practice inherent in public sector operations. At the same time, their colleagues who are less involved in commercial VET activities are confronted with new business discourses which contradict their understanding of vocational education and training as both a broad educational activity and a public good.

'Teaching' remains significant in the working life of many of the VET practitioners interviewed across these contemporary VET sites. Many public sector VET practitioners continue to use educational discourses. They speak of 'teachers', 'students' and 'classrooms'. They celebrate the personal, social and intellectual development of learners. They emphasise broad educational outcomes as well as more specific academic and vocational outcomes and continue to speak of issues of access, equity and social responsibility.

This does not imply that the private VET sector practitioners interviewed are devoid of these characteristics, rather practitioners in these sites construct them differently using the discourses of business rather than the discourses of 'public good'. These educational communities speak of increasing 'customer satisfaction' and to 'add-value' to the educational experience of 'clients'. Moreover, the 'outcomes' of this engagement are constructed more in terms of 'individual advancement' than 'social good'.

The educational identity of VET practitioners remains strong for the majority of respondents involved in this study. This may partly be explained by their professional training; it may be because most of the VET sites investigated are socially configured as educational institutions; it may be because most of these practitioners 'talk' of deriving great professional satisfaction from their interactions with learners in the learning process. Either way, this study provides evidence that the majority of VET practitioners, irrespective of site, share a view of their work that places great importance on the teaching–learning relationship and the educational norms, values and modes of conduct that underpin this relationship.

Background

Introduction to 'new vocationalism'

The Australian vocational education and training (VET) system has experienced unprecedented change in recent times. Not since the changes to technical education following the release of the Kangan report in 1974 has the Australian VET system been the subject of such intense policy interest. Efforts have been made to integrate all forms of work-related learning (public and private, formal and informal, structured and unstructured) into a coherent and unified VET system. Competency-based training, recognition of prior learning (the extension of public accreditation and other regulatory processes to industry, enterprises and non-government providers), the development of an Australian Qualifications Framework and the production of training packages have all been measures designed to facilitate this integration. Moreover, these developments are not simply based on a renewed national recognition of the importance of vocational education and training but reflect an increased international focus on the *economic* importance of education and training provision (Ministry of Education, Skills and Training 1995).

The emergence of new knowledge-based, post-industrial forms of work as a result of the globalising tendencies of capitalism and the impact of new technological innovations, particularly in the information and communication technologies sector, has been central to this international development (Thurow 1996; Castells 1993; Marginson 2000; Waterhouse, Wilson & Ewer 1999). While governments have responded to this in a variety of ways, a common feature of the policy response has been to reform education and training systems so that they contribute to the formation of workers with the appropriate knowledge, skills and capabilities required in these new economic times (Papadopoulos 1996; Gee, Hull & Lankshear 1996; Waterhouse, Wilson & Ewer 1999; Marginson 2000).

These educational changes, labelled the *new vocationalism* (Ball 1994; Grubb 1996) have had effects in all sectors of education and training in Australia. Over the last 15 years efforts have been made to improve the quality, flexibility and relevance of vocational learning outcomes, with industries and business asked to play an increasingly important role in the development and implementation of vocational curricula. Traditional curricula in schools have also been the subject of critique, with commentators arguing that they are inadequate in terms of preparing young people for either work in the new economy or for the emerging social and cultural changes invoked by new economic times (Cope & Kalantzis 1995). Today vocational courses are an integral part of the school curriculum. Furthermore, new vocationalism is influencing contemporary higher education, with universities, once identified as the producers and defenders of societies' disciplinary knowledge, looking at the new knowledges being created by the exigencies of new vocationalism (Senge 1991; Billett 2000; Boud & Solomon 2000).

In Australia, new vocationalism has also been marked by the establishment of a VET market with schools, technical and further education (TAFE) colleges, universities, adult and community education (ACE) colleges, industries and private providers all competing with each other to supply vocational education and training services. This, in turn, has created a new educational landscape, with all education and training practitioners working in new contexts that often not only involve performing different forms of work but also operating with different organisational norms, values and modes of conduct (Seddon 2000b; Chappell 2001).

The requirement that government educational systems contribute to the development of national economies (Ball 1994; Goozee 1993) is not new. Vocationalism has always played its part in the construction of national education and training institutions. However, the current manifestation of new vocationalism goes further, not only in terms of its institutional reach but also in the goals it sets itself. These goals move beyond the development of specific knowledge and technical skills required to competently perform the tasks that characterise particular occupations. Today, additional vocational outcomes are demanded of learner-workers who are asked to internalise sets of general capabilities that are seen as essential in the new 'high performance workplaces' (Waterhouse, Wilson & Ewer 1999; Overtoom 2000).

There is currently no clear agreement over the types of capabilities required of workers in the new economy. They are variously described in the literature as key competencies (Down 2000), 'soft skills' (Hager, Crowley & Garrick 2000), employability skills (Overtoom 2000), generic skills (Waterhouse, Wilson & Ewer 1999) and more recently 'working knowledge' (Symes & McIntyre ([eds]) 2000). However, despite this lack of agreement, these new capabilities appear to demand that learner-workers bring more of themselves to work and learning and invest more of themselves in both work and learning in order to increase productivity and efficiency on the one hand, and gain more personal satisfaction at work on the other. Moreover, this new working 'self' is constructed as a particular kind of self, one that is flexible, autonomous, motivated, self-regulating and oriented to lifelong learning—in short a self that is comfortable in the current context of change and uncertainty (Gee, Hull & Lankshear 1996).

A second feature of these discourses is that they question the idea that the acquisition of these capabilities is a developmental process based on the gradual sophistication of vocational performance. They regard these capabilities as being needed at all rungs of the career ladder and at all levels of educational engagement. Indeed, the contextual integration of these capabilities into all vocational curricula is seen as crucial to the success of contemporary vocational education and training in meeting the needs of the new economy. Therefore *all* VET practitioners, irrespective of their location, institution or qualifications, are expected to contribute to the formation of workplace capability of workers in the new economy.

In this study we examine vocational education and training in Australia, with particular reference to those in the Australian workforce who, in one way or another, contribute to the development of workplace capability. This research project investigates the changing nature of the VET workforce. In particular, it aims to identify the ways in which the site-specific location of VET practitioners influences their understandings of their working identity in vocational education and training.

VET system change

In Australia in recent times fundamental changes were made to vocational education and training. TAFE, the government-funded vocational education and training institution once viewed as largely synonymous with vocational education and training, is now only one of many providers. Schools, universities, industry, private providers and some not-for-profit organisations are now all seen as being part of the VET sector (Maglen 1996).

To promote this change in vocational education and training, federal and state governments have:

- encouraged the creation of a new competitive education and training market by sanctioning the establishment of private providers in vocational education and training
- promoted a competitive ethos within publicly funded educational institutions and extended the public accreditation processes of education and training to industry and enterprise training
- encouraged business and industry to be more actively involved in providing training for its workforce and have encouraged the establishment of private providers of vocational education and training.

A diversified VET sector has emerged and is characterised by ill-defined borders which straddle public, private and non-government agencies.

These changes have also created a VET workforce that is more diverse and fragmented. Now, all practitioners be they TAFE teachers, workplace trainers, human resource development specialists, workplace assessors, learning and development managers, facilitators, tutors or private training consultants, are confronted with a rapidly changing environment that challenges their traditional understanding of their role in vocational education and training.

New groups of VET practitioners who work in quite different VET sites have emerged as a result of this changing environment. These practitioners may work in TAFE colleges, schools or industry. They may work for industry training groups, private registered training organisations, evening colleges or not-for-profit community organisations. Indeed, they may work as private VET consultants or as small businesses. Irrespective of site, these groups of practitioners are being asked to work in different ways and to undertake new roles and responsibilities.

A number of researchers have focussed on the new ways of working that are being constructed for practitioners in contemporary education and training sites (Ainley & Bailey 1997; Farrell 2000; Chappell 2001; Seddon 2000a). A common feature of these commentaries is to suggest that when education and training practitioners are asked to 'do things differently' in their everyday practices they are being called on to become different practitioners; that is, to have different understandings of their role in education and training, to have different relationships with learners, to conceptualise their professional and vocational knowledge differently, to alter their relationship with their organisation, to change their understanding of who they are in the new education and training landscape. In short, to change their identity at work.

Who is the new VET practitioner?

The literature in this area suggests that one outcome of the changes to vocational education and training has been the emergence of new VET practitioners who work in quite diverse sites of practice. However, the use of the term 'new VET practitioner' in this study is itself problematic. It is not used here to imply that a new occupational title has emerged in vocational education and training. No TAFE teacher, workplace or industry trainer, vocational teacher in schools, human resource development specialist, workplace assessor, facilitator, tutor, training consultant or, indeed, VET researcher would identify themselves as VET practitioners. These groups continue to identify either with their employer or with the institutional site in which they work. Rather, the 'new VET practitioner' is used in this research as a general term, one which refers to a group of practitioners who engage in a variety of education and training activities which focus on preparing and developing workplace capability but whose work increasingly extends beyond traditional teaching or training roles.

The term would, for example, include full-time TAFE teachers who undertake a variety of activities beyond the classroom, laboratory or workshop. It would include people in organisations whose primary function is to enhance individual, group and organisational learning within an enterprise. It would include people in the adult and community education sector who manage the vocational side of ACE's business. It would include human resource development specialists and people who manage registered training organisation activities, as well as those who act as independent education and training consultants involved in developing workplace capability. In short, it is a term that attempts to encompass the diversity of roles and contexts found across the various sectors of the contemporary VET system.

The changes to vocational education and training have also seen an increase in the number of part-time, casual and contract positions. For example, a recent research report on employment trends in the Victorian TAFE workforce from 1993–98 indicates that there has been a 10% increase in vocational teaching hours over that period (Office of Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment 2000, pp.35–8). However, this growth has not resulted in more full-time tenured staff being appointed. In Victoria, in fact, there had been an 18% decrease in this employment group.

Employment in the VET sector

During the same period, the Victorian study reports a 22% increase in payment for sessional teaching staff and a 94% increase in average monthly hours of part-time teaching. Recruitment of full-time TAFE teachers is now at historically low levels and there is some evidence to suggest that the percentage of full-time TAFE teachers within the system will continue to fall (Mathers 1997).

These figures not only support the idea that the VET sector is exhibiting quite radically changed employment patterns, they are also consistent with general employment patterns emerging in many economies worldwide. The rise of 'non-standard' employment (Curtain 1996), or what Marginson (2000) refers to as 'flexible' or 'contingent' work in contemporary economies, is now a common feature of the international labour market. Briefly, this pattern of employment suggests that the standard full-time job, characterised by a clearly defined role, stable employment and set working conditions is in decline in the labour market. At the same time, 'non-standard' employment is on the increase.

The non-standard employment category consists of two distinctive work patterns. The first involves work that is usually casual, part-time or sessional and is often either less skilled or more narrowly skilled. Generally, it also involves working for more than one employer in order to earn a full-time equivalent wage. The second non-standard employment pattern is quite different in that it is highly skilled work, more highly paid, undertaken for one employer, with the employee undertaking multiple job roles within the organisation and often working considerably longer hours than in standard employment.

Contemporary VET provision increasingly relies on casual and part-time staff. We also know that companies outsource much of their training using private providers who often employ casual, sessional or contract staff. We also know that this trend is in part an outcome of the economic pressures brought on by the competitive VET market while simultaneously a contemporary strategy used to facilitate rapid responses to changing market conditions, training requirements and emerging skills deficits. This contingent VET workforce is employed to deliver specific courses and usually requires qualifications of a lower order than their full-time counterparts. Indeed, since its introduction in 1990, the Cat 2 Certificate IV qualification and the more recent Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training has become the standard qualification for this sector of the workforce.

TAFE managers also report that full-time teaching staff are 'increasingly expected to undertake administrative functions associated with maintaining and organising learning environments serviced by the comings and goings of sessional and short term contract teachers'. The study suggests that this indicated 'an emerging role for the experienced teacher as a learning environment manager' (Office of Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment 2000).

The study also points out that there is a need for TAFE staff to have 'marketing skills, entrepreneurial and client-focussed approaches to instructional delivery, general management and leadership, team-based management, project management and VET in schools provision'.

Finally, the report, citing the work of Handy (2000, p.84), argues that modern organisations, such as TAFE Victoria, are moving towards 'a workforce constructed around competencies that focus on the central tasks of the organisation' (p.85). It goes on to suggest that:

> . . . such workforces are increasingly being structured on a core/periphery model; a small group of committed career staff manages the business of the organisation, building short-to-medium-term, project-based teams with specialised consultant workers drawn from outside the organisation. (p.85)

This scenario indicates a future in which the VET practitioner is either a VET consultant working across a number of VET sites or a learning manager employed to manage the learning activities of large VET providers. The VET consultant finds employment in TAFE, industry, the ACE sector, schools, industry training groups or other registered training organisations either to undertake specific VET-related projects or to teach specific courses and programs. The learning manager, on the other hand, is employed as a full-time employee either in a VET institution, with another VET

provider or a medium-to-large company involved in VET delivery. In this position they manage all aspects of the organisation's learning-related activities, including working with other organisations and industry clients.

In this scenario we could predict that both types of VET practitioners would act as learning brokers to learners, employers and providers. Their work would involve sourcing, evaluating and producing solutions to particular learning needs. They would liaise with VET clients, act as project managers, develop learning support infrastructure and act as learning consultants, offering various solutions that drive individual and organisational development and change.

They may be involved in the knowledge-management activities of either their own organisation or another. Others would develop and manage the new pedagogies associated with online learning. They would need to understand and be accountable for the quality and financial costs of learning. Many would be responsible for analysing future skills needs and plan-related recruitment, re-training and re-deployment strategies. Almost all would be involved in identifying, negotiating and constructing learning partnerships between and across VET sectors, while others would manage the work of growing numbers of casual and sessional staff employed by VET providers.

Changing cultures

While it is possible to conceptualise the new VET practitioner having the knowledge and skills to perform these multiple roles in the new VET environment, the issue of cultural change is likely to be more problematic. Many 'new VET practitioners' in non-standard employment will be required to work across organisational boundaries and be able to work productively in the different organisational cultures that characterise the newly diversified VET sector.

Vocational education and training now encompasses public, private and not-for-profit providers and the competitive market has brought with it the need for all providers to insert commercial business practices into their operations. In a real sense, all providers are now in the 'business' of vocational education and training. Many VET providers also work under a common regulated framework. Consequently, they are governed by the same accreditation, articulation and other requirements of governments at both state and federal levels. All providers are now influenced by government policy and must negotiate the administrative and policy demands of governments.

These changes are likely to disturb the different norms, values and modes of conduct which have provided public and private sector organisations with distinct and separate organisational identities. They may also disturb the distinctive organisational cultures that are constructed by these differences. For example, TAFE as a public sector organisation has an identity built around public service. It has therefore constructed an organisational culture that values vocational education and training built around concepts of 'social good' (Seddon 2000b). The discourses of equity, impartiality and adherence to the rules and regulations designed to increase public confidence and political accountability have been central to the construction of a shared organisational culture. Now, the 'businessing' of vocational education and training has disturbed this construction, with 'new' TAFE constructed as an organisation with norms, values and modes of conduct that are largely indistinguishable from those found in the private sector. The emergent educational practices associated with these developments have been described by researchers as 'capacity-building' strategies' (Fullan 1998; Seddon 2000b).

The changes to VET provision have also disturbed the organisational culture of the private sector. Criticisms of the new VET system are directed toward its continued 'inflexibility', complexity and difficulty of access (Australian Industry Group 1999). The national approach to industry competency standards is seen as not meeting the specific needs of enterprises (Australian Industry Group 1999, p.63). The overlap and confusion brought about by inter-governmental and inter-sectoral involvement in vocational education and training is criticised, as is the complexity of the VET system. Indeed the Australian Industry Group report observes 'the scepticism with which companies often regard government-sponsored advisory services' in VET (1999, pp.64–5).

Thus, the new VET practitioner must in some senses not only be capable of spanning the cultural divide which distinguishes the world of work from the world of education but also that which distinguishes the world of private enterprise from the world of public service. This requires them to negotiate different values, norms and modes of conduct than those currently found in either the public or private sector.

The project

Research questions

The purpose of this study is to gain insights into the ways in which the site-specific location of VET practitioners influences the construction of their identity at work. The following key research questions guide this study.

- How do different groups of VET practitioners conceptualise their role in vocational education and training?
- What site-specific cultural norms influence the construction of these roles?
- Are there shared norms, values and modes of conduct common to all groups of VET practitioners?
- What site-specific factors problematise the creation of a common culture shared by VET practitioners?

Methodology

The methodology used in this research considers the impact of VET system change on the way VET practitioners understand their work in the diverse sites of VET practice. The research comprised a review of selected literature relating to VET system change and what this literature says about the changing nature of VET work. The study also draws on a wider body of literature relating to economic reform and labour market change. It also includes statistical data derived from a number of published reports to produce a picture of the current VET sector. This material forms the background to the study and provides the context in which the empirical data are analysed.

The second phase of the research involves the collection and analysis of interview data from 28 VET practitioners working in a range of VET sites throughout Australia. These practitioners were selected on the basis of their location in four states: New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria. In selecting participants, the project team interviewed practitioners working for a variety of VET providers. These included TAFE institutes, schools, adult and community (evening) colleges, private business colleges, private training organisations, professional/industry associations and industry skill centres. These categories were consistent with those used in the Australian Bureau of Statistics report, *Education and training experience Australia, 1997*. The research focussed on metropolitan sites and did not seek to examine regional differences, although this might well be a fruitful area for further research.

The project team sought to ensure that a wide variety of practitioners working in metropolitan sites were represented in the research, with participants selected on the basis of their work site, vocational area and employment status. Care was also taken to ensure that, as far as possible, the selection ensured gender balance and included part-time VET practitioners.

The research team negotiated the variety of sites where interviews would take place. Originally, product trainers were included as one of the sites. However, after some discussion with the project team, this group was removed because their work was seen as narrowly focussed and significantly different from the other categories of practitioners.

The following are the interview sites chosen by the research team.

- TAFE/technical colleges (at least one part-time TAFE teacher–trainer)
- ACE colleges
- private training organisations
- private business colleges
- professional/industry association
- industry skills centres
- VET-in-schools

Each interviewee gave informed consent by reading the consent form for the project. Each interview was taped and transcribed by the Research Centre for Vocational Education and Training.

The interviews were conducted using a protocol that defined the basic areas for investigation and a set of broad questions to be covered by the interview (see appendix 1). The interview was semi-structured, with supplementary questions acting as prompts for the interviewer to ensure that the conversation covered aspects seen as important for the research. The interviewers and the research team used normal privacy and confidentiality protocols and gained ethics approval from the University of Technology, Sydney, Research Ethics Committee.

The interview protocol was agreed and piloted by the research partners. To maximise consistency in interviewing, the four interviewers in each state contacted each other to discuss issues and seek clarification of the approaches taken. To assist in this process a transcript of the pilot interview was sent to all interviewers.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were analysed using the software Q.S.R.NUD. IST. This tool was used to identify and track the various themes that emerged in the conversations between the interviewer and the participants; in particular, it looked for points of commonality and differences and tensions expressed by practitioners when speaking of their work.

The interviews conducted as part of this study were used in order to produce localised accounts of what it is like to be a VET practitioner in contemporary times. Interviews provide access to the situated discourses that operate in local settings and offer a way of bringing to the surface the interests and concerns of practitioners—concerns which are sometimes overlooked when analysing the processes and impacts of change from a policy perspective. However, this does not imply that practitioners' accounts of what it is like to be a VET practitioner should be given a privileged status or be seen as providing a 'truer' picture of contemporary vocational education and training.

These accounts are used to trace the ways in which contemporary VET policies play themselves out within specific locations and with specific individuals and groups of practitioners. This study acknowledges that the use of only 28 practitioners limits the possibility of making generalisations about the total VET workforce. However, it does provide specific examples of the ways in which practitioners' locations within the newly diversified VET sector interact with policy changes to both problematise and/or confirm their understanding of their identity at work.

The results of this analysis were also used to produce a short career biography of each participant. The data were then used to inform the major research questions posed in this study; in particular, it was used to identify the points of commonality and difference between VET practitioners working in different sites of practice. It also indicated the tensions that surround contemporary practice in vocational education and training. Specifically, it attempted to identify the ways in which cultural differences in the various sites where VET practitioners work influence their understanding of their role in education and training.

Data analysis and discussion

Biography analysis

Working in vocational education and training

The career biographies of the 28 VET practitioners involved in this study (appendix 2) are in some ways unexceptional. Like most VET practitioners, they did not begin their working life in vocational education and training but came to the sector from other careers. This 'second' career status is in many ways a feature that distinguishes VET practitioners from other educational practitioners, such as school teachers or university lecturers whose initial careers are often in education. Indeed, VET practitioners often use this as a distinguishing 'marker' that constructs them as different from other educational practitioners (Chappell 1999).

However, that stated, the biographies presented here reveal that VET practitioners' experience of work cannot be narrowly defined. While Charlie, Quentin and Pat continue to teach predominantly in their area of vocational expertise (automotive, electrical trades and visual arts respectively), the same cannot be said of the majority of practitioners in this study. Twenty of the respondents had two or more career changes prior to entering vocational education and training, with seven working as school teachers before moving into the VET sector.

Annie, a retail teacher, is now involved in commercial 'project' work involving the development and implementation of specific fee-for-service training to business. She recognises the changes to her work and the significance that commercialism has on her orientation to working in vocational education and training. Eddie teaches in a private college working with international students. He also teaches part-time in TAFE while continuing to run his own small business. Felicity runs her own training company, gaining contracts from the ACE sector and private and public organisations. She also teaches some of these courses. Helen teaches communication but also works as a curriculum developer, instructional designer for online education and training. Her job also includes developing links with industry.

Irene, a literacy teacher, is now heavily involved in online learning. Jenny describes what she does as an 'amalgam of jobs'. Her job includes running a publishing business on campus which provides students with business experience. Kevin is a careers' co-ordinator involved in teaching, counselling and work placement liaison. Lindsay teaches in a private college and runs a brokerage company. Maria teaches IT and office administration and also manages the computer centre in an ACE college.

Olivia teaches hairdressing and spends much of her time with the employers seeking sponsorships and strategic partnerships. Therese describes her work in the Worker's Educational Association (WEA) college as teaching, co-ordinating classes, managing the computer centre and marketing courses. Uri is a private consultant in occupational health and safety training and has training contracts with both private and public sector organisations. Vince regards the work of the TAFE teacher as involving administrative tasks such as program design, workplace assessment, liaising with industry, ensuring funding, managing other teaching staff and administrative support.

Experience and qualifications

The profile of the respondents also reveals that 17 have worked in the VET sector for ten years or more, with only one respondent having less than five years' experience in vocational education and training. These figures are broadly consistent with figures derived from the Australian Bureau of Statistics *Labour Force Australia 1997* (6203.0) which indicates that almost 40% of VET practitioners have had ten years or more working in the sector, with almost 24% having five or more years working in vocational education and training.

In relation to level of education qualification, 23 hold a Bachelor's degree with 20 having an educational degree either at bachelor's or postgraduate levels. Five of the respondents hold or are undertaking masters degrees. Five respondents hold sub-degree level qualifications in vocational education and training.

In terms of work experience, the respondents have a wide and diverse history. Ray has been a wool classer and buyer, part-time TAFE teacher, commercial tomato grower and currently a VET-in-schools teacher in building and construction. While Lindsay is a qualified lawyer, he once ran his own private English language school in Japan, now runs his own brokerage business and teaches in a private business college.

Felicity worked in a government department of education and youth affairs firstly as a disabilities counsellor; she then became the training and development manager and moved to occupational health and safety and workers' compensation before setting up her own training business. Nigel has been a Commonwealth Employment Services officer, later becoming a manager before working in a major private hospitality training college. Currently, he is the business development and operations manager of the college. Vince has been a tent maker, shopfitter and cabinet-maker, originally teaching part time in cabinet-making. Vince is now acting staff training and development officer for the college.

Even those that have worked in vocational education and training for much of their career are now involved in education and training activities quite different from their original VET work. Eight of the respondents have or are running their own small business, with three of the respondents running small training companies. Many respondents undertake co-ordination, management, marketing and curriculum development activities in addition to their teaching.

'An amalgam of jobs'

Many of the practitioners interviewed in this research would agree with Jenny that they undertake an 'amalgam of jobs'. Indeed, these biographies lend support to the view that the work of many VET practitioners has changed substantially from that once identified with the 'traditional technical teacher'. The work profiles of many of the respondents in this study are also in some senses much more aligned to the 'non-standard' employment (Curtain 1996) or 'flexible' or 'contingent' work (Marginson 2000) patterns described earlier in this report.

Some have moved from school teaching to working in vocational education and training. Others work both in TAFE and the private VET sector. Some have set up small training companies that specialise in specific or 'niche' training. Many refer to their management responsibilities as well as their teaching. Numerous respondents have moved between different sectors of public education and between the public and private sectors. Moreover, it seems that, irrespective of site, many are involved not only in teaching but also in marketing and development activities, employer liaison, management and other commercial business practices.

One of the more surprising outcomes of the analysis of work biographies is that the majority of respondents interviewed had worked or continued to work across a number of VET sites. Some had begun working in vocational education and training in a part-time capacity in one site and had subsequently got a full-time position there or at another VET site. Since the reform of vocational education and training, some had set up their own small business in the training area, while others continued to work in industry and business while, at the same time, working part-time in one or other VET sites. A significant number of respondents also had, at some stage or another, worked

in TAFE, with TAFE acting as the initial 'gateway' for many entering the VET sector. Consequently, many VET practitioners are aware of and have, in many cases, experienced work in different VET sites. They have, therefore, some experience of the different norms, values and modes of conduct that operate in these different sites.

Moreover, comments made by interviewees concerning their initial motivation for seeking work in vocational education and training are also informative, as they reveal how some respondents actively sought work in this sector because they wanted the flexibility offered by part-time teaching. Others who had worked in industry looked for work in vocational education and training because the hours and working conditions were seen as better suiting their lifestyle needs, particularly the family needs of interviewees. More than half of the respondents began their VET career in TAFE as part-time teachers, with many spending numerous years as contract or casual teachers before gaining permanent positions in TAFE or elsewhere.

This suggests that part-time work is a positive feature of employment in vocational education and training for some practitioners, while others see it as a first career step in gaining full-time employment in the sector.

Interview analysis

This section of the report constructs a micro-picture of VET practitioners by analysing the situated discourses of respondents working in various contemporary VET sites.

Changing cultures in vocational education and training

This research project draws, in part, on the work of cultural theorists such as Rosaldo (1993) and du Gay (1996) who argue that workplaces are both sites of cultural formation and sites where individuals produce 'sense-making' constructions that help shape their identity at work. Furthermore, this position implies that changes to work and the organisation of work often unsettle people's understandings of their identity at work and lead individuals to re-negotiate these understandings. Given the extensive changes that have occurred in VET policy and practice in recent times, this study proposed that VET practitioners are currently re-negotiating the sense-making constructions that once provided them with their working identities.

Today, VET practitioners are being asked to 'do things differently' in their everyday work practices. They are being asked to have different understandings of their role in vocational education and training, to have different relationships with learners, to conceptualise their professional and vocational knowledge differently, to alter their relationship with their organisations, and to change their understanding of who they are in the VET sector. In other words, to change their identity at work.

This study set out to examine this issue by analysing the 'talk' of VET practitioners who work across various VET sites. The study attempted to discover the 'sense-making' constructions they use to build their working identities and the points of tension or ambiguity that have arisen out of the recent changes to vocational education and training. In order to make sense of the 'talk' of the 28 practitioners interviewed, the study analysed the transcripts of interviews to find any patterns of response that signalled what understandings practitioners have of their work in vocational education and training. This analysis looked for patterns of similarity and difference in the 'talk' of practitioners.

The 'talk' of change

The first and possibly most obvious outcome of this analysis was that VET practitioners working in TAFE (and to a lesser extent in the ACE sector) were the group where the issue of change occupied much of their talk. This was in sharp contrast to most of the other groups of VET practitioners interviewed. The analysis suggested that the TAFE practitioners, in particular, were

experiencing the greatest tensions concerning their working identity in vocational education and training brought on by recent changes to VET policy and provision.

Why this was the case became the organising question of the subsequent analysis of practitioners' 'talk'. It looked to find specific features of change of most concern to TAFE practitioners, and through an analysis of their talk uncover the reasons why these changes were disturbing their understandings of their working identity in vocational education and training. The next step was to examine how VET practitioners in other sites were responding to these specific changes in order to throw some light on the way in which the working identities of different VET practitioners are constructed. The results of this analysis reveal that, after more than a decade of reform, TAFE teachers, in particular, are continuing to re-negotiate their sense of identity at work as a result of the policies and practices which have commonly been labeled the 'new vocationalism'.

VET practitioners and new vocationalism

As noted earlier, the domination of economic discourses over the past decade in the educational policy formulation of governments has been labelled the new vocationalism (Pollard, Purvis & Walford 1988; Grubb 1996; Ball 1994). New vocationalism emphasises the need for all educational institutions to contribute to national economic imperatives and, for the most part, are embedded within human capital theories of economic performance (Papadopoulos 1996).

This economic turn in the educational policies of government also manifests itself in government calls for greater efficiencies and effectiveness in educational provision. Commonly governments call for the installation of a culture of 'enterprise' and 'excellence' within the public sector (OECD 1989; du Gay 1996) and demand greater competition, increased accountability and a focus on quality in public services, such as education.

As outlined earlier, TAFE teachers interviewed as part of this study appear to be the group of VET practitioners most unsettled by the policies and practices of new vocationalism. The talk of the TAFE staff interviewed indicated that many were experiencing tensions around the development of training packages, the bidding processes and quality measures now involved in delivering specific VET courses and the move to provide commercial VET programs for specific organisations and enterprises.

The comments of many TAFE staff interviewed indicated that they believed these new features of practice worked against their understanding of how vocational education and training should contribute to the development of competent workers. Specifically, many of these practitioners saw their role as providing people with the ability to not only work in an occupational area rather than in a specific job, but also to develop a number of much broader personal and social attributes.

TAFE practitioners

The following comments from TAFE teachers indicate some of the concerns felt by this group.

> Another part that is crook is the notion that you just get people to do these competencies because that is what the employer wants—not to develop a rounded person capable of transferring things to different contexts and going on with career development.
>
> We are getting pushed more and more into the training market. We are asked to do more with less. The obvious outcome of this is that students may not be as well trained as we would like them or as well as they should be trained.
>
> I think they (students) are being educated to do a job for an employer but the thing is there is more than one employer, otherwise they (students) are limited in what they can do. I think it is better to have a good education to start with … now most of the trades have a narrower [education].
>
> I mean, I don't think you can separate training, 'cause I guess when you read this stuff about the training market the education part is conveniently left out but when you spend time in TAFE you realise that education is not just about what goes on in our classes. It's greater, it's

> a whole process, it's a social thing, it's the interaction between the student, it's the interaction between the community, we can't do VET in isolation.

The comments of these TAFE practitioners reveal that they interpret the changes to vocational education and training as leading to an increased emphasis on training for specific jobs. This has disturbed their understanding of the educational processes involved in preparing learners for particular occupations. Indeed, these practitioners regard their role in vocational education and training as providing learners with the ability to work in an occupation rather than in a specific job. They interpret many of the current changes to vocational education and training as diluting the ability to achieve this broader approach to occupational competence which they understand as their primary contribution to vocational education.

Practitioners with this view believe these changed approaches to vocational education and training result from the financial constraints imposed on this sector and the changes to vocational curricula, including the use of training packages. Some regard the move to commercialisation as another contributing factor, while others regard the emphasis placed on training, in current policy, as effectively squeezing out any notion of the broader educational purposes of vocational education and training.

From these and similar comments, it seems that many TAFE practitioners interpret recent changes as undermining the central purpose of their vocational education and training involvement. Moreover, they also see their role as providing broad learning experiences that contribute to the development of socially competent learners better equipped to enter the world of work.

Training packages

As the comments below demonstrate, the implementation of training packages is cited by these practitioners as undermining their ability to provide learners with a broader understanding of occupational competence.

> The biggest impact has been the introduction of training packages, whether or not the package designers were really interested in learning as distinct from performance. All the areas I am working in are interested in learning more than performance.

> What the training packages have done, I believe, and this is a pretty controversial thing to say I suppose, is really bring training back to a base level.

> When I think back about the sort of stuff that I was delivering in retail courses when I first joined TAFE to what we are delivering now the standard is just enormous. There has been a huge drop in what I believe to be the quality we have delivered.

These comments, when taken together, suggest that many TAFE practitioners continue to identify with their trade or occupational area. Their knowledge of this occupation brought them into TAFE as vocational teachers and they see the purpose of their role in vocational education and training as assisting learners to develop broad occupational competence. This they regard as being under threat as a result of the greater emphasis now placed on specific job training. They also speak of their more broadly educational role in providing learning experiences that not only produce technically competent workers, but also workers who possess broad social competence as a result of their vocational learning.

Adult and community education

The 'talk' of the practitioners working in ACE reveals that they, like their colleagues in TAFE, are experiencing some tensions regarding their contribution to vocational education and training. Three of the ACE practitioners involved in delivering VET courses to learners spoke of the impact that the increased administrative requirements had exerted on their work. They were now involved in assisting in the production of funding bids and were also caught up in meeting the new demands of the 'VET bureaucracy', including working with industry training advisory bodies and handling the requirements associated with acquiring and maintaining registered training organisation status.

There was also some concern expressed that current training programs were insufficient in terms of developing quality vocational outcomes.

Comments from practitioners in ACE include the following:

> The bureaucrats expect you to attend meetings at the drop of a hat. I know there are changes that occur in programs but I just wonder where the changes come from. Sometimes when you see the changes you think is this really relevant to industry.
>
> I think sometimes when some people become RTOs [registered training organisations] they go through the process of doing it but then I don't know how much time and effort is put into helping people understand what implementation of it means.
>
> I don't believe that the ITABs [industry training advisory bodies] are in fact liaising with the industries to find out their needs. So we are actually embedding extra training into our learners' programs so they are in fact competent within that particular industry.

The accountability measures associated with registered training organisation status, together with the involvement of external bodies such as industry training advisory bodies, are new features of the work of ACE practitioners that have emerged with the changes to vocational education and training. Unlike their colleagues in TAFE, ACE practitioners have not until recently faced managing the bureaucratic requirements associated with providing accredited programs. These practitioners expressed unease with this development, feeling that they were at the margins of decision-making and relatively isolated from the rest of the VET sector.

In some ways the 'talk' of these practitioners also mirrored the views expressed earlier by some TAFE staff—that they valued providing broad educational outcomes in the vocational learning process. They, like a number of their colleagues in TAFE, regarded the personal development of individual learners as being central to their practice. The following comments indicate their views:

> Students coming to community education start to develop self awareness that they can learn, that they are not stupid like they have been branded most of the time in education.
>
> People can come along here and relax and they are learning all the time while they are here. Even at lunch it would be nothing for a trainer to approach a couple of students and talk to them. We don't lock ourselves into a classroom.
>
> I try to open-door it with the students because a lot of them are doing a lot more work and managing a family and kids and being sick and being unable to come to the first two classes. Other organisations don't have this sort of understanding.

For ACE practitioners these broader outcomes were associated with a view that their particular contribution to vocational education and training lay in the provision of vocational learning opportunities for those who experience educational disadvantage. These practitioners brought a strong access and equity focus to their work, arguing strongly that this was not only a central purpose of their work, but also what differentiated this sector from others.

TAFE and ACE support for new vocational system

However, that is not to suggest that all TAFE and ACE practitioners experience the tensions so far outlined. Some have embraced the moves to provide specific enterprise training and to seek out commercial business opportunities in VET provision. The practitioners in TAFE and ACE who have this view now work in the commercial VET market. And as might be expected, they experience tensions in their work significantly different from those of their colleagues as the following comments highlight.

> Probably less than a quarter, maybe even a fifth of the work that comes through my section is your typical TAFE mainstream work where students come in at the beginning of the semester and have programs. Probably four-fifths of the work we do is commercial sort of ad hoc work and stretches all sorts of boundaries that have existed in TAFE.
>
> There is less emphasis in my current job on technical knowledge and vocational knowledge, rather an emphasis on administration and being able to make your way through the TAFE

> system to make things happen. Everyday I am having to work out a way to use the system to do something different that needs to make it [commercial work] happen.
>
> I really believe there is going to have to be a separation of the work that we deliver commercially and the kind of public VET organisation branch. I really think they are going to have to kind of break away and operate quite differently.

TAFE practitioners involved in specific enterprise training cite the difficulties involved in providing this service within the constraints of the public system of VET provision.

Managing to meet the requirements of commercial clients while remaining within the norms and expectations of a system that continues to be structured as a public education institution creates tensions for these practitioners.

These practitioners, unlike their colleagues, are less concerned with a working identity based on the possession of vocational expertise, regarding this as less important than their ability to manage vocational programs and to balance the expectations of clients and the bureaucratic requirements of the institution.

Indeed the tensions created within the institution are such that some practitioners experience real difficulties balancing commercial imperatives and institutional practices, leading to a view that the operational aspects of the commercial and public arms of vocational education and training in TAFE ought to be separate.

One of the ACE practitioners involved in the management of learning programs in the college also took a very commercial approach to her role. She saw her job as involving the provision of an environment that was rapidly responsive to the needs of clients. Her college no longer delivered courses leading to Australian Qualifications Framework qualifications, believing that this allowed for greater speed in organising and delivering new courses which provided participants with vocationally related skills that suited the community in which the college operated. As the comments below demonstrate, she also recognised that, in this environment, the use of tutors employed on a casual basis was essential.

> You have to be able to decide today that next week when the guy goes out you need a new course in there and this is where it is going to be. You have to be prepared to move and be prepared to ditch courses that are not getting the enrolments.
>
> We have to get rid of some of the courses but all our tutors are hourly paid or by contract for each course and so that gives us maximum flexibility to be able to change what we are offering.

In many ways the 'talk' of this practitioner was similar to that of practitioners working in the private sector. Her college was very much in the 'business' of providing specific training that met the requirements of the clients.

Private VET colleges

The 'talk' of practitioners working in the private VET colleges reveal that they have experienced few, if any, tensions as a result of the VET changes. They appear much less concerned about the emphasis on specific enterprise training and commercialisation. Their comments below suggest that the commercial imperative in providing training that meets the specific needs of clients is central to their practice.

> We tend to add quite a lot to some of our products. We add value to the product in order to give students better quality of outcome. We look at what we have to make ourselves different or more attractive in a way than TAFE, putting aside cost and price issues. We have to provide some sort of perceived difference and better services to attract somebody to spend their money.

> Well, I look at things from the customer's perspective having run my own business and that made me realise you have to cater to the needs of the customer. I think that is one of my core attitudes that I like to be perceptive or sensitive to the needs of the customer.
>
> A major legal company comes to us just about every year with at least six trainees. They have been coming for more than twenty years to do our course. It is what suits them, it's what they need.

Private VET colleges have always been in a competitive market, with TAFE being their biggest and most obvious competitor. Practitioners who work in this sector talk of 'customers', 'clients', 'value', 'products' and 'service' and appear comfortable in terms of conceptualising the college as a business.

These practitioners express little anxiety about the changing VET system. The opening-up of the training market has resulted in the colleges and the people who work in them receiving more recognition than they have in the past. Many of these colleges provide organisations with non-accredited training programs which have been tailored to suit their particular requirements of these organisations and have often been in this market for some years. Furthermore, they are now also able to compete with TAFE in the accredited VET market.

Private VET consultants

The more commercially focussed talk of practitioners working in private colleges, in many ways, is mirrored in that of the four private training consultants interviewed in this study. As might be expected, these practitioners depend on gaining contracts from particular businesses and organisations. They therefore speak of 'customer satisfaction' and 'clients'. And as one consultant put it, 'networking' with business 'is probably one of the most critical things. We look at it from the commercial end, naturally'.

> I'm used to working in smaller areas where I have more control about what I actually want to do. At Y they say to me 'so what do you want to do? Good great you can do that'. So they would allow me to do what I wanted to do which was fantastic and the same thing happens at X.
>
> I guess I don't like to be controlled by the changes occurring. I like to make my own changes. So, for example, when I worked in TAFE I was just given a work book and it's like train this and I don't like those constraints.
>
> We now do performance and professional development and a lot of people are coming. So, we are just ecstatic about that, rather than people saying 'Oh, I'll do a training course'—you know, the old shopping list approach. It is now focussed and more targeted.

These consultants spoke positively of their work role and gave little indication that they were experiencing tensions in their working life as a result of changes in the VET system. The four consultants interviewed placed great store in the idea that their work as consultants gave them more personal satisfaction, both in terms of control over their work and in terms of quality outcomes, not least because they developed specific training programs for their clients. The freedom to develop specific programs and activities designed to meet the particular needs of the organisation rather than implementing 'off-the-shelf' training was regarded as a highly satisfying aspect of their work.

These practitioners were well aware of the commercial nature of their relationship with the organisation in which they worked and were emphatic that their customer was the organisation rather than the individual learner. Their satisfaction at work may in part result from their working primarily in organisations that were not actively involved in providing accredited training for their employees. These organisations were more concerned with offering development programs, which produced effective results rather than providing accredited training (Johnston 2001) and this provided the consultants with a greater degree of freedom than would be the case with accredited vocational programs.

VET-in-schools

The interviews with the four practitioners who were involved in VET-in-schools programs presented the study with particular difficulties. Their 'talk' in many ways demonstrated how different their experience was from the other VET practitioners in the other sites. None of these practitioners spoke of the changes that occurred in VET provision and they were not involved in the commercial VET market.

Only two were qualified to teach particular VET subjects in schools and they were also qualified school teachers and therefore taught academic subjects in the school curriculum. Two of the practitioners interviewed had no involvement in the delivery of VET subjects; rather, they acted as managers of the VET-in-schools programs, liaising with employers to find compulsory work placements for students doing VET courses at school. They also managed the relationships between the schools and the TAFE provider of some of the VET-in-schools subjects. In many ways the four practitioners who were interviewed for this study were school teachers who happened to be involved in one way or another with VET-in-schools. Their views on this program were very much student focussed rather than industry focussed.

VET subjects were seen as providing the opportunity for learners who were not successful at the general school curriculum, enabling them to acquire skills such as learning from each other, increasing self-confidence and friendship. VET-in-schools programs were also seen as useful to assist students into traineeships and the workplace.

These practitioners said little about the needs of employers or the quality of the vocational programs with which they were familiar. They looked to TAFE to provide them with this information. Finally, some expressed the view that VET-in-schools was marginal in terms of its impact in the school.

> VET is an extra in schools. It is not seen as part of the school.

Very little can be drawn from the interviews completed with VET-in-schools practitioners, other than to say that the experiences of these practitioners are very different from practitioners in other VET sites. This may be because VET-in-schools is relatively new. It may be because the interviewees were either experienced school teachers who were qualified to teach a particular vocational subject or were career counselors whose job was expanded to manage the VET-in-schools programs. Either way there was little evidence from the talk of these practitioners that the recent changes to VET provision had in any way affected their identity at work.

VET practitioners—managers and teachers?

The changes to vocational education and training brought on by the policies and practices of new vocationalism have also created tensions around the identity of VET practitioners constructed as teacher. These tensions can be found both within and across VET sites.

The notion of VET practitioner-as-teacher remains a powerful 'sense-making' construction for many of the people interviewed in this study. This may, to some extent, be related to the fact that 20 of the 28 interviewees held a teaching qualification either at bachelor's level or at postgraduate level. It may also be that all of the VET sites, with the exception of those associated with the four private training consultants are constructed as educational institutions. And it may be because the overwhelming majority of people interviewed had worked or continued to work in an educational institution.

However the 'talk' of practitioners also revealed that for those involved in the direct delivery of VET programs, their relationships with learners continued to be of central importance, not only in terms of their understanding of work, but also in relation to the satisfaction they gained from work. Moreover, as the comments below suggest, this perspective was apparent in all of the VET sites.

> I think it is seeing how much students enjoy learning. Just seeing the pleasure and the fact that they look forward to their classes.

> The most satisfying is when they [students] come up and say thanks, and they do. They come up and say 'that was great'.
>
> Our students develop a self-awareness that they can learn. They come along and relax and they are learning all the time.
>
> When the eyes light up and they see that somebody cares and that somebody is interested.
>
> We talk about any problems they are having and things along those lines.
>
> I always feel it is rewarding; this may sound stupid but I am really proud of what my students achieve.
>
> We share the common knowledge in the room and empower people to give experience, no matter what their age.
>
> We always say 'just a teacher' because we don't do the administrative part. I suppose we are the people at the coalface.

The responses of many of those from the TAFE and ACE sectors indicated that some of the policies and practices of new vocationalism had dramatically increased the administrative and management activities of practitioners. For some in TAFE and ACE this work is seen as 'getting in the way' of teaching; for example:

> Administrivia is getting more and more … [My] time is taken up with the sort of work that used to be done by people in the front office … I don't particularly enjoy it but someone has to do it.
>
> It's so long since I walked into a classroom from a quality kind of point of view that I've forgotten what it is.
>
> There is a bureaucracy that has to be done [sic]. There is a sort of conflict with the administrators about budgets and timetables.
>
> The bureaucrats expect you to attend meetings at the drop of a hat.
>
> The record keeping has become particularly excessive for the accredited courses, [it] has become quite time consuming. And you are being forced into a direction that you feel is not the right thing for your learners.

Moreover, this additional work was generally seen as being one outcome of opening the VET market of accredited courses to any provider who could not only achieve registered training organisation status but who undertook the necessary administrative and management activities associated with delivering accredited courses.

For those in private training colleges, the issue of increased administrative and management work is not as prominent in their discussion of work. The reasons for this are unclear, although it is possible to speculate that, in the private colleges, there is a greater separation of management and administrative responsibilities from the responsibilities of course delivery. In addition, there are also less administrative and management requirements if the college delivers specific non-accredited training programs to specific organisations and enterprises.

Different management work was also highlighted in the talk of many private providers, training consultants, and TAFE and ACE staff involved in commercial activities. This work involved managing the relationship with commercial clients.

In TAFE, unlike the private sector, the staff involved saw their work as managing both external and internal relationships insofar as they not only had to achieve good working relations with potential clients but also had to manage commercial imperatives within the constraints of a public sector bureaucracy.

> I'm out there meeting the clients to sell programs, kicking programs off that clients have bought and just trying to keep on top of what it is that out commercial clients want.
>
> Everyday I am having to work out a way to use the system to do something different that needs to make it [commercial work] happen.

This was in sharp contrast to their private-sector counterparts. The commercial nature of VET provision appeared part of the culture of private VET providers. All staff 'talked' of clients, customers, value-adding, competition and products. Indeed the commercial nature of VET provision was a taken for granted 'way of doing things' in private colleges. It was not contested by the VET practitioners working in this sector and was not contradicted by the colleges' bureaucratic operations.

As small businesses, the private training consultants had a similar if not heightened view of the commercial nature of their work. They relied on satisfying the commercial client and recognised the critical importance of networking when operating in the competitive VET market, as the following comment demonstrates:

> Networking is probably one of the most critical things. We establish them right through. We look at it from the commercial end naturally … that is why we believe we are the best.

Summary

It seems from these interviews that the management activities created by the policies and practices of new vocationalism fall into a number of categories. The requirements associated with delivering nationally accredited courses and gaining registered training organisation status have increased the work of all practitioners.

However, the management activities associated with the introduction of a competitive VET market plays itself out differently in the private and public sectors, with practitioners in the public sector facing more complex structural and cultural issues than colleagues doing similar work in the private sector. The commercialisation of VET provision in the public sector is confronted by a system primarily structured to handle public education provision. This situation is rendered even more problematic by a context in which many practitioners do not see their role as VET suppliers but rather as teachers within a public educational system.

Findings

Themes emerging from the analysis

The main themes relevant to the effect of VET system change on VET practitioners emerging from the analysis are summarised by the following:

- *Talk of change*: the majority of TAFE practitioners (10) and some ACE (2) practitioners spoke at length about change. This was in sharp contrast to the majority of practitioners interviewed from other sectors (1).
- *Commercialisation*: once again this theme emerged prominently in the interviews. Practitioners (4) from the private sector regarded this as a 'natural' focus in terms of their work. By way of contrast, some public sector practitioners found this new feature of vocational education and training disturbing (6). Those who were involved in commercial course delivery expressed concern that the public sector was not sufficiently capable of responding to commercial imperatives (3).
- *Administrative work*: many practitioners (16) indicated that administrative and management requirements had increased as a result of recent changes to course delivery. This was a common feature of the talk of practitioners.
- *Educational identity*: the majority of practitioners (18), irrespective of location, remained explicitly committed to their relationship with learners, although some expressed the view that this was under some pressure as a result of other responsibilities now placed on them (3).
- *Industry identity*: a number of TAFE practitioners (4) remained committed to their industry and vocational occupation. This was particularly evident from those practitioners from traditional 'trade' areas. These were also the practitioners who expressed reservations regarding the recent changes to courses. Other practitioners did not appear to share these reservations.

Research questions

The study returns to the original key questions underpinning this research. The research has provided a rich source of information from which to elicit answers to these key research questions.

Research question 1: How do different groups of VET practitioners conceptualise their role in vocational education and training?

The opening of the VET market to competition has stimulated the emergence of new types of VET practitioners in this newly created market. Training practitioners in private colleges, private consultants, VET-in-schools practitioners and staff in ACE colleges are now able to claim a position in the VET sector alongside TAFE teachers who, until recently, were the predominant, if not the only, group to claim vocational education and training as their area of professional practice.

The competitive VET market has invoked new roles for VET practitioners which are not only additional to the traditional 'teaching' role but are also substantially different in terms of focus,

purpose and practice. Moreover, examples of these new roles can be found in all of the sites investigated in this research and include the following:

- Teaching: while 'teaching' remains a significant role in the working life of many VET practitioners across all contemporary VET sites, its importance varies considerably from practitioner to practitioner and from site to site. As a result of the policies and practices of new vocationalism, most practitioners are involved in a broader range of activities than those traditionally associated with teaching.
- *The new vocationalism:* these new roles vary considerably and can, at one level, be seen as an extension of the 'teaching' role to incorporate the requirements of new vocationalism. These requirements include teachers placing a greater emphasis on the integration of learning that occurs on and off the job, with teachers therefore taking on a role of learning manager, which involves facilitating opportunities for learning rather than necessarily directing the learning. It also involves the teacher having a greater monitoring function in terms of the quality and cost of programs and also involves identifying the specific skill requirements of employers and liaising with industry and enterprises in a closer, more collaborative way than in the past.
- *Management:* some practitioners report a greater management role in their work activities. This includes managing an increased number of contract, part-time and sessional staff. It also involves taking greater budgetary responsibility for courses and an increased role in quality-assurance processes. In short, an educational management role appears to be now part of teachers' work, particularly for full-time teachers in the sector.
- *Competitive market:* the introduction of a competitive market in vocational education and training has also created new roles for VET practitioners, particularly for those in public sector institutions. The commercialisation of education and training involves some practitioners operating much more within a 'business' paradigm than in a public education paradigm, while the competitive market has also encouraged the emergence of new VET practitioners who operate as VET consultants and who earn their living by entering into commercial contracts with particular organisations and enterprises.

Research question 2: What site-specific cultural norms influence the construction of these roles?

The results of this investigation indicate that, despite the many changes that have occurred in VET provision in recent times, different cultural norms continue to distinguish various VET providers. There is evidence from some of the practitioners interviewed in this research that the private–public divide in VET provision remains significant, supported by the different cultural norms that appear to circulate in public and private VET sites.

- *TAFE:* for some practitioners TAFE is an institution which remains firmly part of the public sector. It is funded by government, is directly influenced by government policy and controlled by the legislative requirements of government. In this sense, TAFE, like other arms of the public sector, is 'governed' in particular ways. It is not only asked to deliver politically sanctioned public 'goods' but is asked to deliver these 'goods' in ways that are equitable, impartial, consistent, directed and which perhaps, more importantly, also adhere to the rules and regulations designed to increase public confidence and political accountability. In short, TAFE and the people who work in TAFE are required to adhere to the rules of public probity. This is not meant to imply that other VET providers are totally 'free' from government influence and constraint; however, they are not constrained in the same way or to the same degree as TAFE. TAFE retains many of the practices inherent in public service and the cultural norms that support these practices.
- *Public education:* TAFE, like schools and the ACE sector, are organisations that are also firmly identified with public education. This identification with the institution of education plays itself out in a number of ways. Educational discourses are central to the construction of these VET sites. These sites have 'teachers', 'students' and 'classrooms'. They often support student groups, sporting facilities and social activities. Basically, they construct themselves as educational communities. These institutions also celebrate the personal, social and intellectual

development of learners. They foreground broad educational outcomes as well as more specific academic and vocational outcomes, and as public education institutions, foreground issues of access, equity and social responsibility.

- *Discourse of business:* this does not imply that the private sector is devoid of these characteristics, rather that it constructs them differently using the discourses of business rather than the discourses of 'public good'. These educational communities are created to increase 'customer satisfaction' and to 'add-value' to the educational experience of 'clients'. Moreover, the 'outcomes' of this engagement are constructed more in terms of 'individual advancement' than 'social good'. Finally and perhaps most importantly, the private VET sector, be it private colleges or private training consultants, like other businesses depends on the capacity to operate profitably.
- *Public vocational education and training and business discourse:* the recent move to place the public providers of vocational education and training within a competitive training market has inserted the discourses of business into these VET sites. As a consequence, public VET practitioners involved in these commercially focussed activities are having to negotiate their way through often contradictory structures and modes of practice inherent in public sector operations. Furthermore, they are also involved in re-shaping the cultural norms and modes of conduct which, in many ways, have been used to construct their working identity. At the same time, their colleagues who are less involved in commercial VET activities are confronted with new business discourses that contradict their understanding of vocational education and training as both a broad educational activity and a public good.

Research question 3: Are there shared norms, values and modes of conduct common to all groups of VET practitioners?

The work histories of the 28 practitioners involved in this study suggest that vocational education and training can now, in many ways, be viewed as an industry. Most of the practitioners interviewed have worked or continue to work in more than one VET site. Many have experienced the different norms, values and modes of conduct that characterise one VET site from another. All have also worked in other industries and organisations. They have therefore not only moved around the VET industry but have also worked with the different cultural norms that not only differentiate one VET site from another, but also characterise different industries and organisations.

These work biographies also suggest the important role TAFE has played in the development of the contemporary VET workforce, with many respondents beginning their VET involvement by teaching, often part-time, in this institution. The study also provides evidence that many VET practitioners, indeed the majority interviewed, have an educational qualification at graduate or postgraduate level.

- *Educational identity* of VET practitioners: the educational identity of VET practitioners remains strong for the majority of respondents involved in this study. This may partly be explained by their professional training; it may be because most of the VET sites investigated are socially configured as educational institutions; it may also be because most of these practitioners 'talk' of deriving great professional satisfaction from their interactions with learners in the learning process. Either way, this study provides evidence that the majority of VET practitioners, irrespective of site, share a view of their work which places great importance on the teaching–learning relationship and the educational norms, values and modes of conduct that underpin this relationship.
- *Holistic learning:* these norms, values and modes of conduct are expressed in a variety of ways but include ideas of respect, learner development, fairness, satisfying learners' goals and providing quality learning experiences based on both relevance and accessibility. This finding therefore suggests that there is a common shared ground occupied by many VET practitioners working across these sites.
- *Commercial contexts:* however, this position is also mediated in practice particularly when practitioners are involved in providing short non-accredited training in a commercial setting. In this context priority is given to meeting the needs of the purchasing organisation or enterprise.

This does not imply that learners' needs are ignored but rather that, as one respondent commented, the 'commercial imperative' comes first.

- *Specific VET contexts:* many practitioners also used discourses of difference to construct particular VET sites. Some TAFE staff constructed TAFE as a site where learners gained broad vocational competence in an occupational area as opposed to specific job training. ACE practitioners emphasised the informal atmosphere of learning in this site and its ability to accommodate the individual personal circumstances of learners and overcome the educational disadvantage that many ACE learners had experienced. Practitioners in private colleges emphasised their commitment to industry relevance, enhanced employability and flexibility in their course offerings, while private training consultants pointed to the advantages of developing learning and development activities that directly related to the needs of workers within the specific context of their work.

Research question 4: What site-specific factors problematise the creation of a common culture shared by VET practitioners?

A 'sea change' has occurred in vocational education and training over the last ten years. Today, vocational education and training can be regarded as an industry that employs a large labour force which undertakes a wide variety of tasks within this industry. The VET industry is unusual in many ways because it encompasses both public, private and non-government providers who are all in the business of competing for market share within this diverse service sector. This study has shown that the VET labour force is now more diverse and mobile than previously understood, often moving between VET providers or working with more than one provider at various times. However, the mobility of the labour force has not broken down many of the distinctive cultural differences that have been used to distinguish one type of VET provider from another. From the interviews conducted in this study, these cultural differences continue to shape the professional identity of VET practitioners in the newly diversified VET industry.

- *Educational goals:* many practitioners interviewed who were working in public VET provision in TAFE, ACE and schools continue to regard these organisations as primarily having educational goals broader than those encompassed by preparation for employment. They value the personal and social development aspects of their work and are often uneasy with what they regard as a narrowing of their educational contribution. In addition, some practitioners, particularly those who have moved into the VET sector to teach their 'trade', are also sceptical in terms of the quality of vocational outcomes achieved by learners in the new environment.
- *Bureaucratic frustrations:* however, those practitioners in the public sector who have responsibility for implementing commercial business practices often express frustration because of the bureaucratic structures of public sector organisations. These include organisational mechanisms that attempt to ensure adequate measures of public accountability, probity and fairness in the activities of the organisation.
- *Business imperatives:* VET practitioners working in the private sector, particularly those in private colleges, also regard their role as primarily educational and value their contribution to the individual and social progress of their students. However, they also recognise that they are working in a commercial environment and speak of their commitment to high-quality provision not only in terms of benefit for their students but also in terms of maintaining and developing the business they are in. They also speak of their contacts with industry in similar ways.
- *ACE and VET-in-schools:* some practitioners in ACE and VET-in-schools express concern that they feel at the margin rather than at the centre of VET decision-making. They felt left out believing that TAFE was the dominant player in the VET market. This distinguished these sites from TAFE and the private VET colleges.
- *Private consultants:* private VET consultants experience working in a number of sites. They express greater satisfaction when providing companies and organisations with advice and programs which address specific problems or issues relating to learning in the organisation or company. Indeed, this study suggests that practitioners who undertake vocational learning activities not part of formal accredited programs appear less constrained and more enthusiastic

about their work. The reasons for this include the greater amount of freedom that this allows, reduced administrative and accountability measures that have to be met, and a much closer relationship developing between the practitioner and the client.

Summary

The competitive VET market has invoked new roles for these VET practitioners that are not only additional to the traditional 'teaching' role but are also substantially different in terms of focus, purpose and practice. The competitive market has also encouraged the emergence of new VET practitioners who operate as VET consultants and earning their living by entering into commercial contracts with particular organisations and enterprises.

Public sector practitioners involved in commercially focussed activities speak of having to negotiate their way through often contradictory structures and modes of practice inherent in public sector operations. At the same time, their colleagues who are less involved in commercial VET activities are confronted with new business discourses which contradict their understanding of vocational education and training as both a broad educational activity and a public good.

'Teaching' remains significant in the working life of many of the VET practitioners interviewed across these contemporary VET sites. Many public sector VET practitioners highlight the importance of the personal, social and intellectual development of learners, emphasising broad educational outcomes as well as more specific academic and vocational outcomes and note the importance of issues of access, equity and social responsibility. This does not imply that the private VET sector practitioners interviewed don't share these views, rather practitioners in these sites construct them differently using the discourses of business rather than the discourses of 'public good'.

The educational identity of VET practitioners remains strong for the majority of respondents involved in this study. This may partly be explained by their professional training; it may be because most of the VET sites investigated are socially configured as educational institutions; it may be because most of these practitioners 'talk' of deriving great professional satisfaction from their interactions with learners in the learning process. Either way, this study provides evidence that the majority of VET practitioners, irrespective of site, share a view of their work that places great importance on the teaching–learning relationship and the educational norms, values and modes of conduct that underpin this relationship.

References

Australian Bureau of Statistics 1998a, *Australia now—A statistical profile education, vocational education and training*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

—— 1998b, *Education and training experience Australia, 1997*, ABS, Canberra.

—— 1997, *Labour force, Australia, 1997*, cat. 6203.0, ABS, Canberra.

Australian Industry Group 1999, *Training to compete: The training needs of industry*, Allen Consulting Group, Melbourne.

Ainley, P & Bailey, B 1997, *The business of learning*, Castells, London.

Ball, SJ 1994, *Education reform: A critical and post-structural approach*, Open University Press, Buckingham, England.

Billett, S 2000, 'Co-participation at work: Knowing and working knowledge', from the *Working knowledge: Productive learning at work*, conference proceedings, 10–13 December, University of Technology, Sydney.

Boud, D & Solomon, N 2000, 'Work as the curriculum: Pedagogical and identity implications', from the *Working knowledge: Productive learning at work*, conference proceedings, 10–13 December, University of Technology, Sydney.

Castells, M 1993, 'The informational economy and the new international division of labour', in *The new global economy in the information age: Reflections on our changing world*, eds M Carno, M Castells, S Cohen and FM Cardoso, Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park PA.

Chappell, C 1999, 'The policies and discourses of vocational education and training; and their impact on the formation of teacher identities', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Technology, Sydney.

——2001, 'Issues of teacher identity in a restructuring VET system', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Vocational Education Research*, vol.9, no.1, pp.21–41.

Cope, B & Kalantzis, M 1995, 'Why literacy pedagogy has to change', *Education Australia*, issue 30, pp.8–11.

Curtain, R 1996, 'Meeting the training needs of flexible workers', cited in Background briefing papers prepared by the Australian National Training Authority for the Responding to Changes in Employment Arrangements Forum, 7 December, Melbourne.

Down, CM 2000, 'Key competencies in training packages', from the proceedings of the 8th Annual International Conference on Post-compulsory Education and Training, vol.2, Centre for Learning and Work Research, Griffith University, Mount Gravatt.

du Gay, P 1996, *Consumption and identity at work*, Sage Publications, London.

Farrell, L 2000, 'Ways of doing, ways of being: Language, education and "working identities"', *Language and Education*, vol.14, no.1, pp.18–36.

Fullan, M 1998, *International handbook of educational change*, Klower, Dordrecht.

Gee, JP, Hull, G & Lankshear, C 1996, *The new work order behind the language of the new capitalism*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney.

Goozee, G 1993, *The development of TAFE in Australia*, National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Adelaide.

Grubb, WN 1996, 'The new vocationalism in the United States: Returning to John Dewey', *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, vol.28, no.1, pp.1–23.

Hager, P, Crowley, S & Garrick, J 2000, 'Soft skills in a hard industry: How developing generic competencies may assist the learning of the small building contractor', from the proceedings of the 8th Annual International Conference on Post-compulsory Education and Training, vol.2, Centre for Learning and Work Research, Griffith University, Mount Gravatt.

Handy, C 2000, *Gods of management*, Melrose Productions, London.

Johnson, R 2001, *The learning practitioner in organisation: Challenges in researching a changing role*, Working Paper 00–42, Research Centre for Vocational Education and Training, University of Technology, Sydney.

Maglen, L 1996, 'VET and the university', inaugural professorial lecture, Department of Vocational Education and Training, University of Melbourne, Victoria.

Marginson, S 2000, *The changing nature and organisation of work and the implications for vocational education and training in Australia*, NCVER, Adelaide.

Mathers, R 1997, 'Trends in employment, skill and qualifications requirements of training staff', in *Research Reports into Professional Development*, ANTA, Brisbane, pp.64–95.

Ministry of Education, Skills and Training 1995, *Major reforms in training systems in five countries education skills and training*, Province of British Columbia, Canada.

Office of Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment 2000, *Trends in the Victorian TAFE institute workforce*, Department of Education, Employment and Training, Melbourne.

OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) 1989, *Education and the economy in a changing economy*, OECD, Paris.

Overtoom, B 2000, *Employability skills: An update*, ERIC Digest 220.

Papadopoulos, G 1996, *Education 1960–1990: The OECD perspective*, OECD, Paris.

Pollard, A, Purvis, J & Walford G 1998, *Education training and the new vocationalism*, Open University Press, Milton Keynes.

Rosaldo, R 1993, *Culture and truth*, Routledge, London.

Seddon, T 2000a, 'Working knowledge for new educational landscapes', from the *Working knowledge: Productive learning at work*, conference proceedings, 10–13 December, University of Technology, Sydney.

—— 2000b, 'Capacity-building: Beyond state and market', *Curriculum Studies 7*.

Senge, PM 1991, *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organisation*, Doubleday, New York.

Symes, C & McIntyre, J (eds) 2000, *Working knowledge the new vocationalism and higher education*, Open University Press, Buckingham.

Thurow, L 1996, *The future of capitalism*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney.

Waterhouse, P, Wilson, B & Ewer, P 1999, *The changing nature and patterns of work and implications for VET*, NCVER, Adelaide.

Appendix 1

Interviews: Summary, by state

State	Site	Specialist area (if applicable)	Name (letter)	Interview date
NSW	TAFE F/T -P/T	Business	A	
NSW	TAFE	Hospitality	B	
NSW	TAFE	Automotive	C	
NSW	VET-in-schools		D	
NSW	Bus. college		E	
NSW	ACE college		F	
NSW	Private training		G	
Vic.	TAFE F/T -P/T		H	
Vic.	TAFE		I	
Vic.	TAFE		J	
Vic.	VET-in-schools		K	
Vic.	Bus. college		L	
Vic.	ACE college		M	
Vic.	Private training		N	
SA	TAFE F/T -P/T		O	
SA	TAFE		P	
SA	TAFE		Q	
SA	VET-in-schools		R	
SA	Bus. college		S	
SA	ACE college		T	
SA	Private training		U	
Qld	TAFE F/T -P/T		V	
Qld	TAFE		W	
Qld	TAFE		X	
Qld	VET-in-schools		Y	
Qld	Bus. college		Z	
Qld	ACE college		AA	
Qld	Private training		AB	

Interview schedule

1. Personal history Could you tell us a bit about your career history?	✧ *How long have you been in this job?* ✧ *What did you do before this? Can you give us a brief career history?* ✧ *How did you happen to choose this job?* ✧ *What experience and qualifications do you have which you think support your current work?* ✧ *What major strengths do you think you have that have been useful in your current work? Where did these come from?*
2. Learners Could you describe the sorts of learners you work with?	✧ *What are the courses they enrol in?* ✧ *What is the typical age of the learners?* ✧ *On average how many contact hours do you have with your learners?* ✧ *What is the previous educational history of learners?* ✧ *What motivates learners to do your programs?* ✧ *What do learners gain from undertaking your programs?*
3. Yourself Why do you think the work you do is important?	✧ *What contribution do you think it makes to organisations or industries?* ✧ *How does what you do benefit learners?* ✧ *Has your work changed recently? If so in what way?* ✧ *Are there new roles, directions or activities now required of you? What are they?* ✧ *What is the most satisfying aspect of the work you do?* ✧ *What is the least satisfying aspect?*
4. Workplace change What would you say are the most significant changes in your workplace that have impacted on your job?	✧ *Have you changed your approach to your work as a result of these changes?* ✧ *How is the quality of your work judged by your organisation?* ✧ *How do you judge the quality of your work?* ✧ *What aspect of your work is least understood by your organisation?* ✧ *What do you think your job will look like in 5 years?* ✧ *What job would you like to be in 5 years from now?*
5. Vocational & workplace learning practitioners What do you think distinguishes public and private providers of vocational and workplace learning programs?	✧ *Would you be equally happy working for a public or private provider of vocational and workplace learning programs? If not why not?* ✧ *What do you think distinguishes teachers/trainers in the public sector from those in the private sector?* ✧ *What distinguishes teachers and trainers of vocational education and training programs from, for example school teachers?* ✧ *What are the most important values vocational teachers or trainers should uphold in their work?* ✧ *Are these values important irrespective of the site or location of the teacher or trainer?*

Biographies: Summary table*

Name	Site of employment	Other employment	Status	Vocational area	Other responsibilities	Previous work experience	Years experience	Quals/other experience
Annie	TAFE		Full-time permanent	Retail	Head teacher in charge of entrepreneurial commercial program	Retail management	10	BBus, Dip. Adult Ed.
Barbara	TAFE		Part-time casual	Communication HRM Hospitality		Secondary school teacher Hospitality, Industry	9	Part BA, Teachers Certificate Industry Certs
Charlie	TAFE		Full-time permanent	Automotive	Some co-ordination	Mechanic	24	.Teacher training
Deborah	VET-in-schools		Full-time contract	Business/ legal studies/ retail	Some co-ordination	Secondary teacher PE Commerce teacher in private business college	16+	Teaching diploma National Return to Industry Program
Eddie	Private provider Business college	TAFE part-time Own training/ business	Part-time casual	Marketing, management HR Personal development	Course design and some co-ordination of subjects	Own business in marketing/ logistics	10+	Trade-related certificates
Felicity	ACE colleges	Corporate training consultant	Part-time casual	Personal development Communication Goal setting Cert IV Training and Workplace Assessor Programs from Admin ITAB		Public sector, education and youth affairs, community programs training and development HR	3	BA, MPsych, Grad. Dip. Adult Ed.
Gillian	Private training (corporate trainer)		Part-time, permanent	Recruitment/ selection training, disability awareness training	Course design/ co-ordination	Public sector trainer Private provider of accredited training	10+	Teachers cert. (UK), Cert.IV Workplace Training and Assessment
Helen	TAFE		Part-time	ESL, Adult literacy	Curriculum project management	Secondary teaching, Business	10+	BA, Dip. Ed.
Irene	TAFE	Some evening college experience	Full-time permanent	ESL CGEA		Secondary teaching	10+	BA, Dip. Ed. TESOL qualifications
Jenny	TAFE		Full-time permanent	Office administration	TAFE Cluster Manager, manages TAFE publishing business		20	Assoc. Dip. Bus, TTTC Grad. Cert. Industry Consulting MEd
Kevin	Vet-in-schools		Full-time permanent	Careers pathways co-ordinator		Secondary teaching		BA, Grad. Dip. and Masters degree

Biographies: Summary table*

Name	Site of employment	Other employment	Status	Vocational area	Other responsibilities	Previous work experience	Years experience	Quals/other experience
Lindsay	Private provider		Part-time casual	Export management	Course development	Lawyer, finance local government public relations; teaching English and other subjects in Japan; international brokerage business	6 months	LLB, Dip. Training and Assessment
Maria	ACE	Has been a session TAFE teacher	Full-time permanent	IT and Office administration	IT co-ordinator	Secondary teaching	12	BEd (Commerce), Cert IV (IT)
Nigel	Private provider			Hospitality	Business Development and operations manager	Employment officer in public sector CES manager	4 years 20+ areas	Public sector in-house programs
Olivia	TAFE		Part-time permanent	Hairdressing	Instructional designer secondment	Hairdressing	12	Trade quals, BTeaching
Pat	TAFE		Part time permanent	Visual arts			23	Dip. Fine Art, Dip. Ed.
Quentin	TAFE	School	Permanent full-time	Electrical, electronics		Electrician Industry trainer	16	BS, Dip. Teach, Diploma Electronics
Ray	VET-in-schools	12 years experience in TAFE, Some other experience in private VET college	Permanent		Some co-ordination of Aboriginal programs, TAFE	TAFE Private college	School teaching TAFE teaching 12 years	BEd in Technology
Sally	ACE	Some experience as trainer in retail enterprise	Full-time permanent	Retail, communication	Training program manager	Corporate trainer -retail	20	BA, Cert IV
Therese	ACE	TAFE	Full-time permanent	Computing	Manager of computing training centre and other lifestyle programs	TAFE teacher IT in industry		Grad. Dip. Computing and Information Science, Grad. Dip. Adult Ed.
Uri	Private training consultancy	TAFE	Part-time	Occupational health and safety		Primary, secondary, tertiary teaching		Teachers Cert, Grad. Dip. Recreation, Grad. Dip. OH and S Management, Master of Public Health

Biographies: Summary table*

Name	Site of employment	Other employment	Status	Vocational area	Other responsibilities	Previous work experience	Years experience	Quals/other experience
Vince	TAFE		Full-time permanent	Cabinetmaking, shop fitting	Relieving institute Staff training and development officer	Tent maker, shop fitter, commercial joinery	9	Trade quals, BEd, Cert. in Assessment and Delivery, Masters degree
Wendy	TAFE		Full-time permanent	Business studies	Educational design and development manager	Secondary school teaching; Teacher education; Fee for service teaching in TAFE	12	BA Dip. Ed., Dip.Mgt, Dip. HR Mgt, Creative Arts quals, Grad. Cert. in Open and Distance Learning
Xavier	TAFE		Full-time permanent	Agriculture/ horticultural science		Department of Primary Industries	14	B.App.Sc, BTeaching
Yvonne	Vet-in-schools		Full-time permanent	Hospitality; Retail and commerce	Special program manager, manages work placements, social and community studies in special program	Retail management, Business management		BEd, Dip. Comm, MEd
Zac	Private provider		Full-time permanent	Initially train the trainer Program manager				BBus (HRM), Dip. Workplace Assessor, Dip. HRM, MEd
Angus-Alistair	ACE	Experience as industry trainer	Full-time	Literacy and language teaching Training placement co-ordinator		Fitter, Apprentice Training College, Department of Industrial Relations, Training Officer	3	B. Adult and Vocational Teaching
Alice Betty	Private T and D consultant	Sessional TAFE		Personal development, communication, career planning Facilitation		Marketeer in large organisation Corporate trainer		BCom (HR and Marketing), Cert. Org. Devt, Grad. Cert. in Adult and Workplace Education

Note: * Names in the biographies are pseudonyms

Biographies

Annie

Annie works in TAFE as a head teacher in retail in a large TAFE institute. She has been in that position for five years. Prior to this appointment she was a full-time teacher of retail for five years, gaining a TAFE-sponsored Graduate Diploma in Adult Education in the first year of her appointment. Before her appointment as a full-time teacher in TAFE she had considerable retail experience, firstly as a store manager and then as a buyer.

Two years ago her role changed substantially and she is now involved in special programs in management. In this role she is heavily involved in the commercial delivery of courses and frontline management programs.

Annie entered the retail industry with a degree in business and marketing. She worked for a large retail chain and undertook a store management program, which she describes as 'very structured on-the-job training'. After successfully completing this program, her initial appointment was as an acting store manager covering any store in New South Wales, which for one reason or another was temporarily without a manager. She remembers this period of her career with affection.

She regards her current position as involving very different work from 'typical TAFE mainstream work', characterising her work as predominantly commercial and 'ad hoc', with the section responding to business requests for specific retail training. She considers that this commercial focus 'stretches all sorts of boundaries that exist in TAFE'. Moreover, she regards one of her major roles as 'working out a way to use the system to do something different that needs to be done'. Indeed, when Annie speaks of her current work she indicates that much of her time is spent in trying to meet and reconcile the administrative requirements of the organisation, while at the same time responding speedily and effectively to client requests for training.

She nominates the biggest changes to TAFE as occurring with the opening of the training market to private providers and indicates that her major responsibility is now to find and service new customers for fee-for-service training courses. However, she is also conscious that she has less time to focus on quality issues relating to teaching and learning.

Annie also indicates that her current work activities are inconsistent with the 'traditional' monitoring processes that determine what counts as TAFE teachers' work. She works across semesters and on occasions teaches for more than 30 hours in one week and has no teaching in other weeks. She finds it difficult to monitor her working hours, particularly the non-teaching work that accounts for much of her activities at work. She also feels that the 'normal' administrative support systems of the organisation don't reflect the realities of working with external clients who require training programs and demand immediate service.

She describes her work as 'project' work and feels that each project takes her 'further out of [her] comfort zone', by stretching the limits of what is acceptable management practice within the institution of TAFE.

Annie also expresses concern about quality, believing that, in the new environment, there has been an erosion of quality in terms of the vocational experience students in TAFE encounter in public programs. She expresses the view that TAFE needs to separate its commercial and public vocational education and training activities, suggesting that they should operate quite differently. However, Annie enjoys working in the more commercial environment of TAFE and would choose to remain in this area of TAFE's activities.

Barbara

Barbara is currently a part-time teacher in hospitality in a TAFE institute, a position she has held for nine years. Before finding her way into TAFE teaching, she was a high school teacher for five

years and worked in international-standard hotels both in Australia and in Europe. Barbara didn't really plan a career that would end up in teaching in TAFE, but she had always wanted to teach and she thinks now that it was her industry experience that qualified her to teach within TAFE. She wanted to be an educator rather than a worker in industry.

Although a high school-trained teacher in English and history with five years teaching experience and having industry training certificates, Barbara paid her own way to do a bachelor teaching degree in vocational education, majoring in communication and organisational management, a qualification which enabled her to qualify for a full-time TAFE teaching position. When she enrolled in this two-year teacher training program there were still full-time jobs available in her area of TAFE, but by the time she had completed the degree all that had changed and there have been no more full-time jobs. Although it was her industry experience that led her into vocational education, she sees her teaching experience in an area other than vocational as being a strength in her vocational work. She also sees her literature background as a strength, although she recognises that there are those who would disagree. Barbara's hours of work vary, which is difficult when servicing a mortgage and the travel time for the work becomes disproportionate to the actual paid hours of teaching.

She teaches in the areas of communication and human resource management and, while this has mostly been in hospitality, she has also worked in horticulture and travel. (Her overseas travel experience was useful here.) Barbara's teaching focus is in challenging the thinking of her students, particularly in team building. She says she has a reputation for being 'tough and really fussy'.

In her nine years as a part-time TAFE teacher she has experienced a number of changes, including both the types of students and the types of courses. The real change is in the way in which courses are now run. Many tend to be very short-term and very diverse in content and focus. Students are from diverse backgrounds and the age range of students for short courses can be from 18 to about 50. The diploma students are mainly 19–30 but may go up to the 40s. The younger ones all have the Higher School Certificate (HSC). About five years ago the diploma course was difficult to get into and Barbara was involved in some culling of students when the grades were high, now it is not difficult to get in. Her concern, along with her colleagues, is with maintaining standards in a competitive market.

Another change Barbara has experienced is an increase in the amount of assessment, and this happens for a number of reasons. One is the number of short courses in a semester (some modules being only two weeks). Another is combining groups of students to meet class numbers with each group requiring its own assessment. Since the introduction of competency-based training, Barbara has seen a resubmit mentality developing among students which increases time on assessment. Another change has been the introduction of a computerised roll system involving double handling of student/class records, as an initial hard copy roll is kept with the details then being entered into the computer program. Although not something she is really comfortable doing, and certainly not something she would have been required to do in the past, Barbara now finds that she needs to ring around employers for industry placements. However, she recognises that she needs a challenge and this has been a challenge for her.

Barbara sees the current students as needing more support. It is not unusual to have situations develop in the classroom stemming from students' personal problems. She has been involved in encouraging individual students to talk with a counsellor and in one instance took her whole class to a counselling session.

Charlie

Charlie describes himself as just a basic teacher—an ordinary teacher training young people in automotive in TAFE. He comments: 'We say "just a teacher" when we are not in administration'. He has taught since 1978, working firstly in a city technical college and later in a large suburban campus of TAFE with 'stints' at smaller suburban colleges.

When he had just finished his apprenticeship he found a position through one of his brothers to gain diesel experience. Charlie then took a job advertised in a New Guinea copper mine where he was a leading-hand mechanic responsible for training 30 Indigenous workers. On his return to

Australia he had jobs relating to vehicle maintenance for a variety of companies, including a scrap metal company, an interstate haulage company, Telecom and the electricity commission. Traditionally mechanics moved around a lot, mastering a skill in one company and then moving on. Charlie sees his strength as a teacher in the fact that he has had some practical experience in 99.9% of what he teaches.

He says he found teaching in TAFE hard work but comments that it still is. This is due to the changes in the complexity of motor vehicles and teachers not getting a lot of training to keep up with these technical changes, changes which include electronics, airbags, cruise controls, petrol injection, and emission control devices. He and other teachers go to courses through Repco Auto Tech in their own time to keep their knowledge current. Charlie teaches apprentices in trade courses in stages 1, 2 and 3. He also has some joint schools and post-trade courses. His college is engine and electrics only. The kids swap with another college to do the underside of the car—steering, suspension, brakes, diffs, gear box etc.

Charlie began teaching in a mid-year intake, so he went into a full teaching program without training, starting teacher training the following year on a reduced teaching load. He comments that most 'tradies' can't see the relevance of teacher training.

Charlie's students are 17–20 (with the occasional ones younger and older), some from Year 10 and some from the HSC. Across the college there are usually one or two girls in the courses. He considers that the entry-level standard is a bit low for what students are expected to learn. There is so much information they have to extract from workshop manuals. But while students need a higher standard of education with so much to understand, there is another side. It is a poorly paid trade and the smart ones will do other things.

The change that has impacted most on Charlie is the change to flexible delivery learning packages. As many apprentices can't cope with it this has meant a tremendous amount of work for staff. Charlie takes work home nights and weekends to try to find a better way of presenting units to the apprentices. In his view, self-paced learning is not for everybody. The assumption is that everyone understands everything they read. Charlie comments that in the high-tech area, kids are OK if they are doing high tech at work, but if they are not they have difficulty with the packages. Tailoring to individual needs is difficult but he believes young people need more goals and direction than the packages offer. The modules in the packages require a tremendous amount of practical assessment that takes up time in negotiations for space and setting up cars on a regular basis. Another change that impacts on Charlie and other automotive teachers is that TAFE is not employing full-time teachers. He believes younger full-time teachers are needed because, although 'part-timers' have the technical knowledge, they don't contribute to the general conduct of the section, and that load falls back on existing full-time staff. In the change to autonomous institutes, statewide contact and communication is virtually non-existent.

Charlie considers that the impact he can have on apprentices is in the breadth and depth that he can offer. As some apprentices work in areas that are restricted in application they don't get a broad experience at work, noting, for example, that there is a lot of yesterday's technology out on the road and kids don't get experience in this in dealerships that service only new cars.

Deborah

Deborah teaches business, legal, retail and office administration subjects in a vocational college for senior secondary students (halfway between TAFE and school education). Administratively the college works as a TAFE body. The director answers to a metropolitan TAFE institute, teachers are paid by TAFE, students enrol in TAFE, pay TAFE fees but they do HSC subjects. Earlier in her career Deborah was a secretary, a teacher in a business college, had travelled and was for ten years a teacher of both physical education and commerce in a girl's school. The requirement for her current position was for an experienced teacher who could work with young people and who 'had done different things'. Deborah also has experience with Outward Bound and is interested in the all-round rather than specific education of young people.

Although she held a teaching diploma in both physical education and commerce, after five years she found the mix of physical education (including afternoon and Saturday sport) with general classroom teaching very taxing. Deborah then decided to move sideways to concentrate on commerce. She describes herself as being very much like a sponge. She tries to take in as much as she can if it will help students and has participated in the national teacher return-to-industry program and has worked at a vocational education directorate for a term. Such experiences, along with retail training, provided material to take back into her classes. She likes to use examples from the real world of work rather than from texts. Although she wasn't considered a VET teacher in the girl's school, her interest in providing first-hand experiences for students, such as running a company along commercial lines, meant a transition to vocational education and training was then not difficult for her.

Most of Deborah's students are aged 16–18 and are in Years 11 and 12. They choose a vocational subject for a TAFE qualification and then choose their other HSC subjects. They go to the college four days a week and on the fifth day they work in industry. In the past, students came from off the streets or from the workforce as a second chance at education, but now 65% come from private schools to escape discipline, uniform, rules and regulations. Most think they are independent learners and this is a priority of the college. Student attitude to actual attendance varies but Deborah allows no time to catch up on missed classes. This fluidity is a challenge to both staff and students but the college has a learning centre with teachers timetabled to assist students. The college runs through 50 weeks each year, with teachers having four weeks annual leave that can be taken at negotiated times. Teachers and students are on a first-name basis and teachers relate with students as young adults who need rules and guidance but who are on the way to becoming adult learners. Workplace experience gives students confidence in dealing with a range of adults.

Deborah has experienced a number of changes since joining the college staff. First, the college concept of 'vocational' has changed. Education is now described as being seamless, which has resulted in her teaching in a broader range of subjects. Second, she also now visits students in the workplace. Third, there is an endless paper chain, with teachers required to complete both TAFE and Board of Studies mark sheets and records.

She still gets a buzz from teaching every day and from the interaction with the students and their response on a personal level. However, Deborah does find it difficult to keep some students on track and attending classes, particularly if they are income earners for families. The difficulty is in coming up with individual strategies for ensuring continuity of learning. At one stage she was acting co-ordinator but she has no wish to continue in this administrative role. She plans to move sideways in a career change to a reduced teaching load with an opportunity to develop other interests. When the college opened, teachers were employed on the understanding that they would have only two three-year contracts (six years maximum) to allow the institution to evolve and to have the ongoing injection of new ideas. Currently, the college has same part-time teachers who add enthusiasm and new ideas. The advantage of having full-time staff is that they are more available to students and provide continuity.

Eddie

Eddie was teaching in an old established business college when it closed. He was one of a handful of teachers who then moved across to a private college where he lectures predominantly in the marketing area. This college is an affiliate of a regional university as part of a pathways program for students to move from the college to the university. This is not his only area of work. He lectures part-time in a city TAFE institute (which he has been doing since 1994) and also conducts his own businesses. He describes a typical day as spending the morning in his businesses, teaching in other organisations in the afternoons but returning to his businesses late in the day. He also travels overseas to international conferences and to do corporate training.

In the early 1970s he gained what he describes as his 'second piece of educational paper' from what was then a major technical college. It was the Purchasing Supply Management Certificate. Eddie explains that logistics was very big before the days of barcode scanning. He remembers a teacher in that course who gave selflessly of his time for his students and Eddie made a promise to himself

that he would go back to the institute and do what this teacher had done for him. He later undertook a university program in international logistics which included marketing, warehousing distribution and just-in-time management which, in the 1970s, was well ahead of its time.

Eddie describes his teaching as being marketing-based but including management, human resource management, personal development and issues in running a business. This breaks out into 39 different subjects. Eddie's broad work experience includes running highly political industry associations, publishing associated magazines, government policy negotiations, lobbying, building networks, and giving evidence in commissions of inquiry. He describes this all as being very useful as he has one foot firmly in the real business world while the other is in academia and learning.

The mix of students taught by Eddie at the college includes those who are hoping to get jobs, those who are already working and those who are overseas university graduates who came to gain the college qualification. However, most of the students at the college are on their way to getting their first real job. Some come through on specific learning programs. There are people from 'every country you could think of'. Some students have parents who are paying their way, others students are working part-time to pay their way and still others have had jobs and have saved enough money to attend the college. The ones who are paying their own way are the ones who are investing in themselves and are fully attentive.

As a teacher of international students who are away from country and families Eddie also takes a pastoral care role, something he feels strongly about.

There is a minimum academic requirement to gain entry to the college based on an appropriate level of English literacy. Eddie perceives current students as having a higher standard of education that they are sharpening and honing. These students also have stronger life experience and skills. Eddie's students move into a world where they need to be able to work in an environment of change. These changes include changes in government policies and accompanying regulations which they then need to integrate with organisational policies and the personalities, capabilities and needs of people they are working with. To equip these students effectively, Eddie believes courses should be cutting-edge and ahead of their time.

The most significant change that he has experienced has been in the level of the use of technology. However, in terms of the effects of system changes he indicates that stronger accountability on job performance has been particularly significant.

Felicity

Felicity conducts her own training business and is currently subcontracted to the ACE sector in two colleges across two streams of learning as a trainer and consultant. One is the training stream which includes both accredited (primarily Certificate 4 in Workplace Training and Assessment and administration courses usually for frontline management) and non-accredited courses to meet group needs. The second stream is in professional development which includes lifestyle improvement, communication skills and relationships. These courses are reasonably costed and accessible. She comments that all the topics she teaches are considered soft skills by business. Felicity started her consultancy three years ago after working for 13 years in a major government department in education and youth affairs. She has a very broad range of experience from that department. Initially, she was an employment counsellor for clients with disabilities, for the unemployed, for people with English as a second language or for those who were state wards after custody release. Later she moved more into community programs and then into the department's human resources unit as training and development manager where she has been for six years. Her last 18 months in the department were again in human resources in occupational health and safety, workers' compensation, equal education opportunity—very much a policy focus.

She holds a BA that includes psychology and sociology and a masters degree that includes advanced psychology. Felicity also holds a Graduate Diploma in Adult Education and Certificate 4 in Workplace Training and Assessment. In addition to her qualifications, she believes her broad-based work experience provides the foundation for her understanding of what it is like to be a team member, a team leader and to manage small and large groups. She states quite definitely that she

couldn't do what she is doing now without that background, particularly her experience in the area of employment.

The clientele for each of the streams she teaches is quite different. The students in the training stream are mostly women, from across a wide age range and from very diverse backgrounds, including hospitality, English language training, nursing and their own businesses. They attend either because they want to, or to widen career choices or to formalise qualifications. About 20% go on to do more courses in the same topic area.

The students in the personal development stream are 80–85% women mainly in their 30s and 40s with a range between 20s and 70s and occupationally a big mix. The men who come are adventurous, self-aware and not 'typical Aussie blokes'. Felicity finds her students like group work, as it is neither as confronting nor as costly as individual personal development. This course provides flexibility for meeting individual needs whereas business courses have a 'bottom line' and a dollar cost. Most of the business courses are assessed, which can make people anxious and concerned, and Felicity feels she has a responsibility to ensure that these students are not only successful in meeting the assessment standards but are also successful in achieving at a personal level.

One of the biggest changes that Felicity has seen is the trend for organisations to employ people who already have foundation skills or to send them to do the qualification externally. Very little human relations development (HRD) is now done in-house. Another change is that training now has to be short, sharp and precise. In the past, people would have gone to a two, three or even five-day course, often by residential mode, but now that doesn't happen. Students want short practical, less theoretical courses—the 'give it to me now', 'give me tips—easy things I can do' type courses. This is harder in a sense because she has to work out what can be achieved in the shorter time.

She remarks that it's hard to know what you don't know about the system, and that when you do know it's often even harder to find out about it. As people become more responsible for their own learning, Felicity sees a trend towards more accreditation and for more short courses. Personally, she is happy to work in either public or private provision, as both have advantages and disadvantages.

Gillian

For just over three years Gillian has been a part-time training and development consultant in the corporate development and training unit in a major government department, mostly doing recruitment and selections and disability awareness training. She also does train-the-trainer and internal consulting to various departmental business units. For the past six to seven years she had also worked for a large private provider specialising in accredited certificate 4 trainer training and the Diploma in Workplace Training and Assessment. She managed training for a major client—specialised training within the business, redesigning induction programs and training trainers. As this was an Australia-wide company (mostly Sydney and Melbourne), Gillian travelled widely. She also delivered courses and facilitated the use of outdoor activities for teamwork training.

She no longer works with the private provider because of the unpredictable hours of work and travel distances that encroached on life and family. Gillian is now more settled personally but from a career point of view sees she may have lost progression potential. However, in her current position she can work autonomously with scope for personal development. In the private sector and public sectors, this is less likely to happen, as there is a requirement to offer competency-based and accredited training. In her current position no competency-based or accredited courses are offered. Her current position fits into neither public nor private provision as such but, rather, into human resources and development.

Gillian describes her first training position as being in a very large government training and development unit. For two years she developed training on a cost-recovery basis. The impact of this was huge on the organisation, as full-cost recovery was difficult with increasing market competition. It was when that unit closed that she began working part-time with the private provider.

Her own training began with a five-day train-the-trainer course in 1986 and then category 2 which she later upgraded to certificate 4. She is now gathering evidence for an upgrade into the Graduate Diploma in Workplace Assessment and Training (taking herself down the same recognition of prior learning path that she takes her learners). She also holds a Diploma in Adult Education and a Teachers' Certificate in Drama from England. This she finds useful in personal presentation. From having read thousands of student evaluations, she summarises her strengths as being able to fully engage individuals in group processes and provide positive and fun programs. She comments that she allows people to feel OK about not getting things right the first time, reinforces their progress, tries to be interesting, tries to cater to different learning styles and to make learning fun and enjoyable while still being focussed on the learning.

Gillian describes her current learners as self-nominated, but due to a revived performance and professional development program, they now tend to come with identified needs rather than on 'a nice to do' basis. All staff, including senior level management, are required to update every three years. Staff cannot sit on recruitment panels if they haven't been on a course, so training for staff on recruitment panels is a unit priority. The average age of learners is around 40 with management being older (between 40 and 50) and other staff tending to be in the late 20s to 40s. More than half would hold or be undertaking tertiary qualifications with a high expectation of quality of training.

She laughs when she says there hasn't been much in her background to equip her for this job but she believes that being confident, being a good facilitator, speaking intelligently and knowing the content have enabled her to do the job effectively. She likes training but can't see herself as a grey-haired 55-year old getting up in front of a group of 20-year-olds running courses. However, she would like to be in training development. Neither can she see herself working in a public provider such as TAFE because of its size and bureaucracy.

Helen

Although Helen left her initial formal secondary teaching position to have children, she always 'kept teaching' —as a private tutor, as a volunteer at the local primary school and later in a nursery school in England. Apart from teaching she also had the experience of working in business. When Helen wanted to return to formal teaching it wasn't possible to get a part-time position in state secondary schools. So being philosophically opposed to teaching in private schools, she returned to formal teaching 11 years ago as a part-time teacher in TAFE, initially teaching bridging courses for women. This was followed by periods of teaching English as a second language (ESL) and adult literacy programs. Helen is committed to publicly funded education.

After three years her role shifted from teaching to being a mix of teaching and curriculum writing and more recently curriculum development. The mixing of roles began when she was invited to 'tie an existing curriculum project together' and to do the editing. This extended to working with writers into researching, writing and eventually to curriculum development. She describes herself as a good thinker, who can ask questions and organise information in ways that clarify issues for herself and for others.

Helen's qualifications are a Diploma of Education and a double history major in arts. She expresses concern that she does not feel she has qualifications to support her TAFE role and that at times she has felt like an interloper. She takes the issue seriously and funds her own attendance at conferences and reads and discusses issues of concern with others. Her area of teaching is communication. She believes strongly in the Mayer key competencies and is concerned that the competencies, which include communication, are often referred to as soft skills. She finds this hard to understand because in her experience these are the skills which employers value and these are the skills that are the hardest to teach.

Helen's students can be grouped into three main areas: women returning to study (whose qualifications can vary from graduates to people who have no post-school qualifications); immediate post-school students (mostly male with Year 12 education); and third, adult learners (again mostly male but older and enrolled in a postgraduate course but some of whom are not graduates but have gained entry through a form of recognition of prior learning). With these students she works at the national level mainly by distance mode. Classes can include students with

disabilities, international students, students whose grasp of English is poor, students with poor literacy and numeracy skills. Helen feels strongly about holding these students long enough (even though they may not achieve a formal qualification) to provide them with opportunities for personal successes along the way.

Overall, the biggest change in Helen's work has been in the fracturing of the job from being a job which just involved the teacher and students into one covering a diversity of involvement. In Helen's case there has been a shift from time spent solely in teaching into areas of curriculum development and to developing links with schools, particularly in relation to new apprenticeships and traineeships. Another change in her work has been towards the development of resources for internet management of international education. This involved her in a pivotal capacity, working as an instructional designer and editor of the courses and the resources needed for that type of education.

Helen experienced these changes within a broader framework of funding changes which required TAFE to make its own money; the introduction of training packages which essentially replaced the existing qualifications; and having to re-think everything in the light of a new set of outcomes or units of competency for the students. Changes had also occurred in quality procedures, although Helen sees this to be largely a matter of 'shuffling paper' rather than having time allocated for the discussion of issues of concern.

Irene

Irene is a teacher in TAFE. Initially, she taught English to migrants in the migrant English area. Then eight years ago, when a job became available in literacy and the certificate of general education for adults, Irene took that position and has worked in that area since.

Before this she taught Years 11 and 12 at a secondary college. While her children were young she taught English as a second language and advanced speaking skills at evening college.

Irene's initial qualification was a BA in English and Psychology followed by a Diploma of Education (when she was teaching at secondary level) and then a Graduate Diploma in Ethnic Studies and Education which gave her a Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) qualification. It is this TESOL training that she believes helps most of all with her work with migrant students. In addition, she considers herself to be very flexible and, through experience, able to teach a wide range of ages and skill levels.

Most of Irene's students are adult, middle-aged male and female migrants. Her oldest student is nearly 80 and her youngest would be in their 20s. They are people who have been out of education for a few years and who have been in Australia for usually five years or more. They lack confidence and are eager to improve their reading, writing, reading and listening skills. In doing the course they also pick up computer skills and undertake numeracy classes as well. Most have completed Year 12 prior to attending TAFE. Some have had interrupted schooling because of war and other factors while others have professional qualifications which they can't use because of language barriers. In addition, Irene has some Australian-born students who have not had positive experiences at school in the past and have opted for a second chance at their education.

Her students enjoy the social contact and the learning and Irene finds great satisfaction in their improved self-esteem and confidence and their enjoyment.

The biggest change that she has seen is the amalgamation of campuses within her institute with the expectation that teachers be more flexible, with nearly all staff working across campuses. Each year is quite different from the last.

The positive side of the amalgamation is that there is a lot more interaction with people from different campuses. The less positive side for Irene has been that there is more travelling, and she feels that there is not much time for sitting and thinking about lessons because more time is taken up with travel and other tasks. Once she had her desk at one campus, but that is no longer the case. Now she carries her administrative and teaching requirements from place to place and has to be thinking ahead and be very organised.

Since the institute gained a Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs contract, there is increased paperwork for staff who interview students, and owing to the auditing procedures for institutes, teachers need to ensure their bookkeeping is up to date. Also, the keeping of rolls is more detailed than previously. For example, when there is a public holiday, teachers are now required to account for what work they do in lieu of that day and to keep records of all students, including examples of each student's work.

In addition, Irene has seen a significant change in the use of computers and has had to increase her computer skills. Professional development has been available to her in this field. She has become involved in online teaching and, along with other teachers, is upskilling in this area. Irene expects an increase in an expectation to teach online but she expresses concern for her students for whom the social aspect of interaction in class is important.

Jenny

Jenny has what she describes as an 'amalgam of jobs'—in actual fact, three jobs. She is a former TAFE teacher who is now a cluster manager for both administration and customer service over eight campuses and who also runs an innovative publishing business on one campus. Before this amalgamation of jobs, Jenny had been cluster manager for administration and prior to that was a program co-ordinator. She began working in TAFE as a professional teacher in 1982 and has always taught in the office administration area. She has also been responsible for managing the quality processes in one of the institute divisions.

Jenny's initial qualification was the Associate Diploma of Business in Private Secretarial Practice. For ten years she then worked in secondary and technical schools with the Trained Technical Teachers Certificate but went to TAFE part-time, when family responsibilities precluded her from continuing to work full-time, and she has been there ever since. In addition to her initial qualification, she holds a Graduate Certificate in Industry Consulting and a Masters in Education Leadership and Management.

She finds it difficult to say which qualification has been the most useful in her current work and believes that each working experience has been a learning experience for her and has contributed to the way she does things today. Jenny's technical skills (which had their beginnings in writing a word processing manual), her organisational and people skills, being flexible and innovative and her willingness to take a chance are needed strengths in this current amalgam of jobs. She sees the biggest chance that she took as being the formation of the campus publishing business that grew out of her having written a number of course books for student use.

Another innovation she is soon to introduce on her campus is a practice firm in which students from marketing, accounting, business and office administration will have the opportunity to experience a simulated business environment of a sponsor company. Students gain business acumen rather than just meeting classroom competencies. Jenny has also been involved with VET-in-schools (she taught in this program for a number of years), and with traineeships and new apprenticeships. She has also been involved with recognition of current competence for people who have been working in the office administration area of industry for many years but who do not have a qualification.

Jenny describes the TAFE learners with whom she works as generally lower income students who are looking for an opportunity to improve their job prospects. Most are middle-aged, although recently, owing to the youth voucher system, there has been an increase in 15–19-year-olds. Students have ranged from a 15-year-old out of school for a year to a 70-year-old doing a full-time course, and often includes arts graduates seeking a vocational qualification. Nurses who want to leave shift work or who have experienced back injuries working with patients do courses to gain office skills in order to work in medical clinics. About 95% of students are female.

Institute students are highly sought after by local businesses. Recently Jenny had 63 organisations ring her with placements that she could not fill.

The system change of greatest impact for Jenny is the current high ratio of sessional teachers. Her experience is that sessional teachers come and go and, generally, there isn't then a cohesive group of teachers on each campus. While there has been some reduction in the TAFE dollar, it has not been huge, but what is expected for that dollar has increased dramatically. A balance is attempted by employing sessional staff who are cheaper to employ. Although some sessional teachers have taught for many years, they are not eligible for long service leave and other associated benefits of full-time employment, which is of concern to her.

Kevin

Kevin is in his first year of working in a secondary school as a careers pathways co-ordinator, a role which includes finding work placements for students in the VET-in-schools program. He came to this from a similar position in which he travelled between two locations where he was also involved in VET-in-schools. He found this to be a fragmented way of working and expressed concern that he hadn't done either job as well as he would have liked. As he currently works in only one location he is now able to focus his work more effectively. Kevin has been involved in work experience since the early 1980s and also has experience in vocational education in the United States of America.

His work in the vocational education and training area is concerned with finding work placements for students participating in VET-in-schools programs. Currently, in his school, there is an additional co-ordinator responsible for VET curriculum development, but with forthcoming changes within the school staff structure, he foresees that he may soon be doing both jobs. VET areas with programs which are his responsibility in this school are electronics, information technology, multimedia, sport and recreation and hospitality.

When Kevin began his work in career pathways, he participated in a one-month in-service program which was available to all teachers in the same position. He holds a graduate diploma and a masters degree in a careers stream. Of the skills gained by training and experience, he singles out interpersonal skills as being the most important to his work. Being able to 'relate to the kids' is vital, whether counselling them into the right stream or talking to them about problems they are having. He confesses he is not so strong on the administrative side. Although he takes more of the counselling approach in his works, he concedes a 'marriage' of both counselling and administrative skills would be ideal.

The VET students that Kevin works with are in Years 11 and 12. The amount of his involvement with each student varies according to the work placement requirements. As the Year 12s have done most of their work placement, he finds he works more with those who are coming into Year 11. At this school the VET-in-schools program wasn't marketed as vocational education and training as such but rather as a particular module. He commented on possible reasons for this. (It wasn't his decision.) One possible explanation he thought might be that vocational education and training is often associated with being more suited to less able learners and, so, by not naming the program as vocational education and training more students across the spectrum of general ability might be attracted. Kevin is conscious of the responsibility of doing the job properly, as students' careers are at stake. He believes in showing students that they have options and that the choice they make can make differences in their lives. Within the school he has a lot of flexibility in the way he works. Kevin's previous work in placing students in work experience (where they are exploring interests and 'tasting') does help him in finding the work placements which are a compulsory part of particular VET programs.

One of the most satisfying parts of the work for Kevin is seeing some 'kids' who don't have a history of achievement 'actually succeed at something'. Some move into apprenticeships, some follow up in other courses in TAFE and there are others who stay on at school when previously they otherwise would have left. The least satisfying is the constant state of flux brought about by system changes that come too quickly on each other, not allowing time for successful implementation of one before there is another.

Technology in the workplace is changing constantly; the needs of kids he works with have changed and most don't really know what they want to do. Kevin observes that this is perhaps due to a

combination of the traditional areas of employment for kids no longer having places available, together with changing social and family environments. When he started in the VET area in 1983, VET participation in schools was small. In his current location, a significant percentage of the Years 11 and 12 do a VET stream. Kevin has an open-door policy for students to come for advice and he comments that few understand how much time it takes to realise satisfactory outcomes for the students.

Lindsay

Lindsay has had just six months' experience teaching part-time in international trade in a city business college. While he enjoys teaching, he intends to stay part time as he conducts his own brokerage business in trade with Japan. His career pathway to this point began with a law degree from a major Australian university. However, his interests were not in being a lawyer and he went overseas after being admitted to the Bar. On his return to Australia he worked as an in-house lawyer in finance. Then followed a period in local government, a period as a lobbyist for a central business district property owner and yet another in public affairs in the financial area of the building societies' association. From here his career moved into public relations consulting. During this time he visited and acquired a strong interest in Japan so he made a decision to break from his working life and return to Japan. He stayed for eight and a half years.

While in Japan the only thing that he could do as a non-company sponsored visitor was to teach English. Lindsay acquired a job with a city school where he worked for two and a half years. He picked up other part-time teaching positions and was offered the use of a classroom in a building that was used as a 'juku' or cram school. This enabled him to start his own school, to leave paid employment and operate as a self-employed person. He was the sole teacher for the next seven and a half years. His students were business people and their families. The youngest was six and the oldest 36. The six-year-old was the daughter of one of his students. Her brother attended as well. At the same time he set up a trading business importing from Australia.

Lindsay didn't have formal teacher training or teaching experience in Australia apart from being a volunteer speaker with an English-speaking union with people who wanted to improve their English through conversation. When he returned to Australia he approached educational institutions to search out opportunities to do guest speaker or guest tutoring spots in international trading. It was through this that he gained his current position. Because of his lack of teaching qualifications he completed a diploma in training and assessment systems and also observed the styles of more experienced tutors to improve his own teaching style. His first role in the business college was to develop an export management module as part of an executive certificate in international trade (certificate 4 level) in which he taught. Lindsay found his experience of trading and teaching in Japan very useful. His public relations experience was also useful in recognising and responding to customer (student) needs.

His students are Australian citizens and fall into two main groups. One is a younger mid-20s to mid-30s-year-old group who are moving into importing and/or exporting and an older group in their mid-40s who are more specific in their needs. Their interests are in trade finance, international transport, international marketing and commercial and international law. Some come because they have been sent by their employer but others are self-funded and most are enthusiastic. Typically not many are tertiary-educated. For most it is their first post-school learning experience. As fear of exams is real for many, Lindsay incorporates a high component of ongoing assessment. Students do project work on their own companies where possible or he sets up model companies for individuals doing the course without company support.

Because of his very recent entry into teaching in Australia, the biggest impact of system changes Lindsay has experienced is the proliferation of acronyms that he had to learn. In the changing arena of vocational education and training his college is seeking to establish a niche area. Many of his students are from small companies, such as family-run companies which are successful in the domestic market, but because of current economic trends and the currency exchange rate have started looking at international markets. Traditionally, Australian companies have felt more comfortable in English-speaking markets, so trading with countries such as Japan requires a higher

level of cross-cultural understanding—an area which Lindsay will develop. He will continue teaching part-time while operating his own trading business.

Maria

Maria began working at an ACE learning centre 12 years ago. Since then she has taught accredited TAFE/VET computer courses and is now the information technology (IT) co-ordinator. She manages the computer centre and teaches half-time mostly in the Certificate 2 Office Administration and Certificate 2 Information Technology. Initially she taught in secondary education. At this time she taught keyboarding in the commerce department. She holds a Bachelor of Education (Commerce) and a degree in secretarial studies and she has her Certificate IV in Information Technology and train-the-trainer for adults.

For Maria, secondary school teaching was less about teaching and more about 'having meetings to organise meetings', so when she was pregnant she left that position. When her daughter was three weeks old she applied for a position as a part-time keyboarding teacher (on typewriters) in the adult learning centre. She then moved in a natural progression to computers which she really enjoyed. Maria then gained sessional employment in TAFE to keep her skills and knowledge current, although it cost more in babysitting than her earnings. She feels she would like a work placement to keep current.

As she works in an isolated location, the course in information technology was the most useful experience because of the contact with other IT people. This was as important to her as getting the qualification. She feels her wealth of teaching experience and her life experience are both very useful, as many of the students are young mothers wanting to change direction and she has been down that path herself. She is confident that being 'good with people', being interested in people, is her main strength. Maria's learners are mostly women about 30–40, many being single mothers who want to re-enter the workforce and think they have no skills at all. She finds these women easy to work with because they are very eager. Another group, again mainly women, want to help spouses in their business. With GST there has been a demand in this direction. She also has a 'scattering of males' attracted by the technology side. Occasionally she has younger students who haven't coped with secondary school. Maria thinks this might be a desirable growth area.

Traditionally her students are nervous about maths because of an earlier attitude that females need no more than 'vegie maths'. Her students do not have a high level of schooling but, although some have only Year 7 or 8, their literacy skills are generally average. They have a low level of confidence, self-esteem and study skills but are keen to get a job and they have determination. While some start off undertaking only typing they will move on to other subjects and begin to think in terms of career rather than a job and many go on to further study. The centre adapts their courses to include certificate 2 but are broader than that to ensure that people are employable. Maria believes strongly that the current training package certificate 2 level is not suited to adult employability.

Maria nominates training packages as the most frustrating change that has taken place, and one in which the teachers had limited say. Other changes that have impacted on the way she works are an increase in record-keeping for the accredited courses and funding arrangements where the centre has to wait to know what they can offer. She also comments that computers have not only changed how things are done, they have also changed why we do things. For example, because the postal rate booklets that used to be available in hard copy are now only available on the internet, office procedures change and teachers have to be aware of this. Maria feels she is only able to handle the changes in accountability, quality control, documentation, and record-keeping for TAFE audits, and statistical collection and clients' satisfaction evaluations because she is a self-confessed 'organisational freak'. She chooses not to work for private providers. She likes the supportive pastoral care role of the smaller centre—and believes the values that teachers should hold are commitment, caring, confidentiality and keeping teaching relevant. Maria states firmly: 'I am a teacher at heart and I don't want to go into administration'. She gains great satisfaction in the friendships and the success of the women.

Nigel

For the past four years Nigel has been the business development and operations manager in a well-known hospitality training college. The organisation is a one-stop shop for training. It hires out apprentices, supporting them through their careers by monitoring their employer placements and transport and location difficulties. His responsibilties include the educational arm of staff development. Since 1979 he had worked for the Department of Education and Youth Affairs as the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) manager.

During his varied career he sat on boards that included educational bodies, regional council labour advisory committees, apprenticeship advisory committees, a university labour market committee and also helped establish a range of training organisations and develop projects. He says he 'nearly got the sack' for setting up a project that based part-time apprenticeships in a school-based system without anyone knowing. Nigel began his career in the early 1970s as an employment officer when there was a very intensive management development program. Staff development was excellent and he was able to do a wide range of courses over a period of time, including Methods of Instruction and Assessment, Train the Trainer, Counselling and Interviewing programs, as well as courses through major universities.

He became familiar with the labour market, school, TAFE college and university programs, made work experience placements with early school leavers who were not coping, provided programs that didn't duplicate what others were providing but rather 'expanded and blended'. Some of his earlier innovations with traineeships and apprenticeships were forerunners to VET-in-schools programs. Through all of this varied experience he became very conscious of filling labour market needs and sees this, along with his historical knowledge, as a strength in his current position. Nigel considers this multi-perspective experience to be very useful when he has to satisfy the needs of two clients in each placement—the needs of the employer who wants to employ the apprentice and the needs of the student who wants to be an apprentice. The blending of the two needs is where he sees his experience has impact.

Nigels' learners are at entry level and want to be chefs or good food and beverage staff. The organisation is an entry-level hospitality training organisation providing certificate 1 through to certificate 4 in the areas of commercial cookery and food and beverage. Nigel is clear that the main requirement for success is a passion for the course because there is a financial cost. Furthermore, because the hospitality industry is one where employees are working while everyone else is playing, attitude to work and life is also crucial. Within training, the organisation concentrates on attitude rather than skill development.

Of the young people he works with, not even half have completed secondary schooling. Some have had part-time work in places such as McDonalds. The age range is mostly 17–18 but the oldest last year was 38. There are difficulties with those younger than 17 because of the beverage side of the training. Sixteen-year-olds can do kitchen training. He describes the motivation as a passion for cooking and a desire to be of service, and the goal is to have a career that enables travel throughout the world. Nigel feels the impact he has is in giving people a chance to build from their entry-level training and steering them into an integrated training plan in line with their ambitions.

The main changes to impact on Nigel's current work have been the national training packages, competency-based training and an increase in paper work—in systems recording and statistical reporting and researching a myriad of funding sources both within and outside government. Another change that he sees is the proliferation of training organisations that conduct all the training on the job. With competency-based training it is possible to do this; however, Nigel is concerned by a recent survey that showed that young people who trained wholly on the job missed a breadth of training.

Olivia

Olivia is currently on an eight-month secondment from an assistant lecturer position in TAFE to write an assessment tool for a national training package. She first started in TAFE 12 years ago as a part-time instructor while still running her own business. When her classes grew she saw potential

in teaching as a career move, so sold the business, went to university to do a Bachelor of Teaching degree and then won lecturing contracts within TAFE. To diversify her skills she accepted a secondment to develop a specialised learning project. A newly created permanent lecturer's assistant position was then advertised, and, although it was below the level that she had been working in, Olivia applied because it had permanency. She took this security move before starting a family. On returning to TAFE after the birth of her second child she reduced her commitments to a .4 loading. Although she still holds this position, at times she has worked in the higher classification of lecturer and at other times has worked on curriculum, on staff development for the introduction of flexible delivery, open learning and the implementation of the Teaching and Learning program in her state. Her initial qualification was in hairdressing, which was followed by qualifications in cosmetology (hair and beauty) and trichology (study of hair and scalp disorders and hair loss).

Olivia groups her students into those who are typically aged 16–18 who are in certificate level hairdressing or in certificate or diploma level beauty who have been signed up on contract with an employer and have gone to TAFE to do their off-the-job component of their training. The other group are typically 16–17-year-olds looking for a first career in the industry in the pre-employment hair and beauty courses which provide a foundation for a career in four specific areas of that industry. The beauty course also has a more mature-aged group of students who are looking for a career change or a career after having a family. Some are working full-time and training part-time to go into business for themselves or to make that career move. There is still a licensing classification within hairdressing so there are also those who further their studies for A, B or C class licensing. For example, to get B class endorsement to a certificate, hairdressers need to gain the trichology qualification. These are offered as self-paced learning modules.

Olivia describes the industry impact of her work as the provision of a skilled workforce through the off-the-job component. She monitors student progress by going to the employers to show them what their students are learning and the learning guides. This is very different from when she first started with TAFE, when salon owners were not very aware of what apprentices were doing at TAFE. Salon owners are now much more aware and have greater expectations of students' training progress. In general there is greater accountability. Lecturers liaise with employers in relation to student progress in the self-paced modules, what they are up to in their learning, and how the employers can help. As students in self-paced mode can attend TAFE more than one day a week, there are varying attendance patterns, and students must make bookings with the lecturer. Olivia recounts how accurate records had to be kept to allocate students to lecturers in the required ratio and to ascertain when students were nearing completion.

She nominates a greater need for accountability as being the most significant change for her. She now needs more of a business head. Searching for strategic partnerships with business, sponsorship and advocates for programs is now part of her work. User choice, marketing, and the need for a business plan for hairdressing and beauty have all had an impact. In the contracted training area, TAFE used not to have any competition. Olivia is very much involved in decision-making, classing herself as a self-managing unit.

Olivia foresees that her future role will be more one of managing student training. A high percentage of her work will be in mentoring, in workplace assessment and participating in a larger marketing push. The possibility of more online and self-paced learning interests and excites her, as students will need clear support and direction.

Pat

Pat has worked for 23 years in a number of regional and city TAFE locations teaching both face-to-face and external students. Initially she was a TAFE part-time instructor in a country area working full-time hours before eventually winning a six-month contract in a city location. It wasn't a planned career move but rather something that was there at the right time. This contract was 'rolled over' every year for the next seven years. Pat became permanent through a subsequent union push for staff who had been on contracts for an extended time to be converted to full-time permanent status. This pathway came about because as a non-bonded teaching student she hadn't

automatically been eligible for a teaching job. Her workload varies semester to semester and she is currently on a .8 program involving about 18, but up to 25, hours of teaching per week.

She was confident that her qualifications were more than adequate for teaching in her area as she held a four-year art school Diploma in Fine Art (Painting) with an additional one-year Diploma in Education. She later participated in a number of updating courses and master classes to keep her skills current and relevant. Pat teaches in drawing and painting and in the degree course in applied and visual arts.

Pat's students are from many and varied backgrounds, and many and varied abilities and age groups, but while there is no focus on any particular group, there is a requirement to have a certain number of school leavers. In her courses, students attend either for a one-year certificate (Certificate 4 Applied and Visual Arts) or a three-year diploma. The diploma is currently being upgraded to a degree course as from 2001. Students who don't have Year 12 can gain access to the degree course through successful completion of the certificate year. Most students have a personal interest in art. School leavers, for example, may have done art at school, while older students may have done courses through community-based centres and then gone to TAFE to do more intensive art study.

Pat perceives the impact of her work as being important to the wider community rather than on any particular industry. Pat comments that in a world dominated by concepts of computer and business studies and analysis that what adds balance and richness to a society is an understanding of the arts and art appreciation and application.

Pat nominates the change to a degree course as being the most dramatic change she has experienced because of the different structures and the changes in the approach to the curriculum that she has helped to write. In addition, a locational change to purpose-built arts accommodation is involved. The most satisfying aspect of her work is when she sees students who have limited ideas, but who do have abilities, gain confidence in resolving ideas and problem-solving. The least satisfying aspect she noted was, as a colleague had described it, the 'administrivia' that is taking up lesson preparation time. This has come about because staff in the front office are no longer able to do all the administrative work currently required.

As a result of these and other changes, such as larger class numbers (they have gone from 10 or 12 to around 18 and up to 25), most of the challenges arise from managing the number of students in relation to bringing them to a point where they meet the competencies. In the art area, a great deal more hands-on individual work with students is required. The art lecturers are perceived outside the unit as being the 'arty ones who have a good time', but the level of hands-on work with students isn't always appreciated.

Pat enjoys what she is doing and hopes to continue in teaching. What she finds distressing is that many talented people end up in 'boring management positions' where their skills and talents no longer have impact on students. In terms of public and private provision she sees herself working only within the public system. While there is accountability in both systems, she feels that the multiple accountability in the public system is preferable in terms of upholding standards.

Quentin

Quentin began his working career as an electrician in a government department and then quickly moved to become an industrial trainer. In 1985 he applied for a TAFE position and managed to secure a contract for a year and then, in 1986, because of extra studies, gained a permanent position. He has been very focussed in his study and career moves. He says he 'has always studied'. As well as his initial electrical trades qualification he holds a Diploma in Electronics, a Diploma of Teaching and a Bachelor of Science in computing and mathematics (the latter provides diversity in his teaching areas). He received support for study from the institute by way of time off and flexibility of hours.

His students range from those doing a school/TAFE vocational program, to third-year 20-year-old male apprentices, to evening students who are mainly older A class practising electricians who

come to an update on the new AS3000 rule book. Quentin is passionate about teaching and particularly enjoys his evening course because of the very high motivational level of the students. He isn't involved in the selection of students who come from school. As a result there is some absenteeism from unmotivated students who are sent to the group. The normal weekly teaching load is between 18 and 24 hours, but as Quentin is on additional developmental work at the moment he is on 22 hours.

One of the important changes that has impacted on Quentin's work is the lower minimum age of the students he now teaches. Because of the schools/TAFE program, he is now teaching vocational content to younger students. Up until two years ago his youngest student would have been a 16-year-old pre-vocational student. Now he has Year 10s (15-year-olds) and Year 11s. (He no longer has Year 9s as they do not have the prerequisite maths to handle the course content.) He describes the impact of this on the way he teaches as being quite dramatic. While he treats pre-vocational students as young independent adults, the school students are used to a school regime, see TAFE as school and like to play, so there are discipline issues to be addressed. Another area of change is the requirement to now do more general clerical work than he did in the past. The campus is now more self-governing in the operational sense and is more accountable for its own finances and costings, with the institute manager having a strategic role and not located on Quentin's campus. Work groups are responsible for interviewing employers, selecting students, generating class sheets, doing timetabling and class rolls, organising part-time staff and approvals and securing replacements for leave. He recently requested a change in his responsibilities to allow him time to develop the course around the introduction of the new AS3000 rule book which is quite different from the earlier rules. It is based on European standards and puts more pressure on each electrician to know what they're doing. Quentin found he needed to familiarise himself with the content and validate his interpretation of the rules with colleagues and the regulating bodies as electricians have to get it perfect—it is a life or death situation.

The night class is the most satisfying and motivating part of his work. This class is successfully setting up its own web page. The least satisfying part of his work is the paper shuffling—having to make sure rolls are 'spot on'. If there are errors in the rolls the college loses $300 per student.

Quentin remarks that he sees the future job of teaching as being one where the teacher will be more pro-active—going out there and getting work—going to trade shows and 'selling the wares'. A down side, in his view, is that there is now competition between the TAFE institutes, a situation something that he doesn't support. However, he sees there is a lot of work out there to be done, but it may be quite different because industry, for example, often wants courses run at times that traditionally have been holiday periods for teachers. In terms of working in public or private provision, Quentin prefers to work in public provision at the moment because, in his view, everything in private provision—pay rates, conditions, facilities and resources—is below the standard available in TAFE.

Ray

Ray, a qualified woolclasser, was a woolbuyer and built his own house before having a car accident when he was about 40. During his convalescence he was offered a job co-ordinating a course in TAFE for three months on a trial basis. He then worked for TAFE continuously for the next twelve and a half years. Initially, he was part of a vocational preparation program for the long-term unemployed. During the past five years, Ray co-ordinated the Aboriginal education program, but a policy was adopted whereby everyone who wasn't Aboriginal would be replaced with an Aboriginal person. He subsequently lost his job in TAFE.

However, he hadn't been full-time with Aboriginal education and, so, during that time, had also taught some Year 8s in a private college in a VET building and construction program. He enjoyed that experience and decided that he really enjoyed teaching more than growing tomatoes commercially (because of the transient nature of work he also had 28 glasshouses of commercial tomatoes) and so made a decision to go into school teaching. He responded to an advertisement that required him to do a one-and-a-half-year Bachelor of Education in Technology course that he later followed with two specialist diplomas, one being a diploma in religious studies. He recalls that

he was on Austudy with a family during this period. After finishing his study he was offered a .6 position in a rural high school. This quickly grew to a .9 position that now includes teaching a special education class (health and safety, work education and a lot of practical work), the young achievers award, replacement teaching for another teacher in plastics, photography ('whatever is happening') and VET building and construction.

The VET program is available to students from Years 10, 11 and 12 in a cluster of schools. They gain some accreditation for their VET program. He finds some of his students have difficulties with basic maths, for example not being able to divide by two, which causes problems in practical classes. He also finds that while his 15–16-year-olds are excellent workers when they are actually working, as soon as they stop working they do 'stupid things'. While he attributes this to a lack of maturity, it does make his job more difficult. If the students are out on a worksite and can't be relied on to 'do the right thing' in lunch and smoko breaks, then the whole program loses its credibility.

As Ray has been in the schools system for only six months, he hasn't felt any personal impact from changes in that time; however, he comments that his colleagues are disillusioned with the rate and types of constant changes that seem to take place almost for change's sake. For teachers like Ray in the VET program, changes in the TAFE assessment procedures were an added frustration. He comments that, in the VET program, a very broad range of skills is required and it's not just because it is a rural school. He says it stems from changes in the depth of training for teachers. There is no longer a four-year degree. At this stage he would still like to be teaching technological skills in the school in five years' time, but he is concerned about the requirement for a broad range of hands-on skills. He feels that he doesn't have the same range of skills as teachers in TAFE who are teaching a similar course within the TAFE system.

He nominates respect for others as the most important value to hold. In order to develop respect for others in students, he believes teachers should demonstrate respect for others, be honest and should not put anyone down. He comments that he would be happy to work in private provision, as he thinks there would be a greater sense of security because you would know the people who are running a smaller enterprise. His experience in the public system, where decisions are made from somewhere other than the immediate workplace, is that when the dollar stops you're gone! He acknowledges that private provision would not be immune from this but perceives the public sector as less personal because of its size. In terms of differences between TAFE and school teachers (and he has worked in both systems), he says that TAFE teachers can be more relaxed because of the maturity of their students, whereas high school teachers need to be more like 'policemen' [sic]. In spite of this, he finds working in schools more rewarding because he sees students produce practical outcomes such as complete motors, boats and large-scale kites in class.

Sally

Sally now works in a community organisation that started up about 15–20 years ago to provide targeted training for unemployed people in office administration. Last year a merger with another organisation broadened the organisation's focus from computing and office practice into hospitality, aged care and horticulture. Sally was a trainer with a retail enterprise before having children. After her second child she returned to the workforce as a part-time trainer in two locations. At the time of joining this community organisation she was in retail training and later moved into communication programs and programs for women returning to the workforce. Her subsequent involvement in co-ordinating programs eventually led to managing some programs. She later co-ordinated courses for the long-term unemployed, and, in the last year, became training manager. She describes her career as about 12 years that have been continuously hectic and chaotic. Sally had always enjoyed training and, as she needed to get back into the workforce, she considers herself very lucky in getting into the organisation at the time that she did.

She nominates being a communicator as her greatest skill. People tell her she also appears very calm (although she says she sometimes doesn't feel it herself) and that seems to have an effect on the staff. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in psychology and anthropology and Workplace Training

Certificate 4 and was looking at doing the next level but finding it difficult to fit it in at the moment because she is currently doing a Bachelor of Theology.

Sally's learners include a number of state government trainees who are training for industry, the youngest being 16 but most being 18 as they stay at school until then. She also has 'work for the dole' students who are mostly 18–35, and rehabilitation clients as well as fee-for-service people from industry who can be any age. Not unexpectedly, the educational history of the learners varies tremendously. Some learners are gaining basic work skills to get a job, while others who are already in the workforce want to pick up new skills. Most of the training is entry certificate levels 1, 2 or 3, with an emphasis for those in office administration on software packages for gaining 'temp' work.

In terms of organisational changes, she says the biggest for her was the introduction of competency-based learning which led to self-paced learning and we 'haven't stopped' since it suits the learners. Other changes have been the introduction of training packages, accreditation and changes in terminology. The organisational merger also brought changes in client needs. These needs were different from those of their previous learners. Sally describes the last year as being really challenging for her because she didn't really know what hospitality trainers and horticultural trainers do, so there was a need for a lot of trust and understanding all round. There were things that worked in certain ways in office administration training but would not work in other areas.

The possibility of e-learning (online training) has captured Sally's imagination and she perceives from the inquiries that she has had that this will be the major difference in the job in the next five years. For equity of access, she comments, courses should be offered with a combination of on-line learning and face-to-face. There is one location in the surrounding community where every house in a particular street has been allocated a PC and a modem, a situation which would allow the organisation to train using this community facility. She sees a different physical space, with a mentor together with online and distance delivery being the way of the future for training.

Most of Sally's colleagues have moved in and out of both private provision and TAFE according to where work is available. The rates of pay are higher in TAFE and there is greater stability, but usually teachers are required to undertake more administrative duties.

She believes firmly in the dignity of the person, treating everyone with dignity especially as some people come in on the dole and have a feeling that they are 'dumb' and have less worth.

Therese

Therese has been in a permanent position in the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) for 18 months, but prior to that had been a TAFE lecturer in a city institute for five years. She is currently the manager of the computer training centre and also manages textiles, recreation, dancing, performing arts, literacy and lifestyle programs. Although her qualifications and work experience are in the computing area, she has a background in most of the other areas through her personal interests. She made the move to the WEA when she felt it was 'time to move on', as all TAFE work was contract work and she wasn't keen to stay on contracts long-term. Currently she has her own classes and oversees the installation and maintenance of computers and updates of programs and web sites. She holds a degree in accounting, a Graduate Diploma in Computing and Information Science and a Graduate Diploma in Adult Education.

The courses that her learners do are all short courses, the longest being 16 weeks. However, Therese makes clear that students put packages together equivalent to a course, say, in TAFE. She describes her learners as clearly falling into specific groups. There are seniors doing a specific program that is run over a longer timeframe than are mainstream programs, as many of these people have never switched on a computer before coming to class. Another group of people undertake the courses for work purposes in instances where it is necessary for them to have the knowledge and experience but not a piece of paper. The computer courses are not accredited. Therese comments that the organisation 'got out of accreditation' and that there are now only a few courses across the programs that are still accredited. With no accreditation there is no assessment, and, regardless of this, the atmosphere in the classes is much less threatening. But the students have paid for their courses, want value for money and want to get something out of the course.

Looking back on her 18 months in the WEA she comments that any changes that have occurred have been mainly those she has made herself. The only market-driven change has been the demand for MYOB (Mind Your Own Business accounting) and GST (Goods and Services Tax) packages which occurred as a result of the changed government tax policy.

Therese likes what she does and comments that her main satisfaction comes from the fact that her job is so varied and is continuously changing. There are many things she does apart from teaching, co-ordinating classes and looking after the computer centre, and these include producing and updating brochures for the organisation and developing promotional display cabinets. She regards the main difference between working in the community sector and the TAFE sector is as being that (because the WEA courses are not accredited), there is no assessment and the courses are short. As a result there can be a quick response to demand (or an unexpected lack of demand). Therese compares this with TAFE procedures that require about three years to gain approval and accreditation to run a program. With the speed of change in computing and information technology, providers have to be in a position to respond quickly.

She finds it hard to predict what her work will look like in the future but prefers community provision. Therese doesn't like the red tape and politics of the public sector. When something comes up she 'wants to do it—not talk about it'! In a climate of budget cuts and privatisation, the public sector doesn't treat its staff very well. She loved the students at TAFE and never felt her contract was threatened, but rather that it was time to move on. In WEA, tutors are selected on their skill levels and reputation rather than on paper qualifications. Rates of pay are in a similar range to TAFE.

Therese works on the principle of quality of provision both at personal and business levels. This she does with the view of providing the best learning experience because for some learners it is the first step back into formal study. If this step is not a good experience, earlier negative experience may be reinforced and the person maybe be lost to learning.

Uri

In his varied career Uri has taught in primary, secondary and tertiary programs. After his initial training he taught for a while in secondary schools before returning to study to do a course in recreation. On completion of this course he taught at primary level for a short period and then worked briefly with 'intellectually disturbed kids'. He later worked at a city university in a centre for physical health and for WorkCover before moving into private consultancy in occupational health and safety (OH&S) where he has been for the past ten years. In this time he has been teaching, delivering and writing tertiary courses. He delivers some courses on site for the food industry as an OH&S consultant and prepares a range of courses for a major TAFE institute as a deliverer of training. Uri describes his move into private provision, and occupational health and safety in particular, as being a case of being in the right place at the right time. New legislation came into being after he moved from the university to the health service, which then meant that someone with his background was needed, and as a result he became the first rehabilitation co-ordinator and OH&S officer at the university. Because of his teaching experience, he then started to write and deliver courses. He has since written books and other publications. Uri considers that circumstances created the opportunities—there was no conscious decision on his part to move in this direction. He followed his teachers' college secondary school studies with a Graduate Diploma in Recreation and a Graduate Diploma in OH&S Management from which he subsequently articulated into a Master in Public Health (MPH) degree course. He has now finished this course.

As a consultant to TAFE he delivers programs for both new school leavers and mature-aged re-entry and unemployed learners. Most of the new school leavers in the Certificate of Food Processing have just finished matriculation, while the mature-aged re-entry or long-term unemployed learners in the OH&S modules come from a wide range of ages, commitment, motivation and skills. However, some are embarking on a career change. For example, some switch from being a chef into food processing because they are 'tired of the hours and the work' but still want to be in an area associated with food.

Uri has no hesitation identifying the impact his teaching has on industry. It clearly impacts on the integration of the requirements of 1986–87 OH&S legislation through a range of courses for industry. Within TAFE all units of work include occupational health and safety and as there has been a continuing and particular focus on the integration of occupational health and safety requirements into all units of the food industry, he is approached regularly by TAFE to either write or assist in delivering courses. The most satisfying parts of his work relate to being able to demystify OH&S issues by turning difficult concepts into discrete, easily understood terms for students and being able to provide handy 'tools' for managing occupational health and safety in the workplace. One of the hardest things is trying to balance the disparity in the levels of skills in the same course. As an example, he may have new school leavers with no OH&S experience at all in the same class with a business executive who has actively participated in WorkCover award schemes.

As a presenter in 'workplaces that are now running leaner and meaner', the change which has impacted the most on Uri's work is that he is now required to deliver more in a shorter period of time to a higher level of understanding and competency. Supervisors in the workplaces are now required to carry a higher load of responsibility through 'DDR, OH&S, HR and so on' and are continuously on call by mobile phone and beepers and this 'is the way it is in business now'. As a consultant Uri finds being asked to deliver as much as possible in the shortest period of time difficult when the outcomes are experience-based. Uri likes occupational health and safety to be integrated into quality systems rather than being delivered as a stand-alone subject

In terms of public and private provision he is comfortable in both. However, he comments that TAFE often seems to be slow to react to market needs while private providers are geared to respond more quickly.

Vince

Vince has two trades and worked as a tentmaker for three and a half years and a shopfitter for five and a half years. He served his apprenticeship as a cabinetmaker as there was no shopfitting training as such at that time. He worked in commercial joinery, domestic work and with an architect doing building work. As a shopfitter he spent huge amounts of time working interstate for up to 100 hours a week and decided to make a lifestyle shift when his eldest son had problems at birth. He comments that most people who make such a decision have been driven by a life change. It was a matter of deciding what he would go into and as he was 'pretty good as a communicator' he thought 'he would have a go at getting into the teaching stream'.

He began his teaching career around 1993 or 94 as the first casual tutor in the cabinet-making area and describes his appointment as being like 'dropping a hand grenade' as it was seen by some as trying to steal their jobs and he was initially met with concern. He funded his way through a full-time university course for 18 months while working part-time. Subsequently a two-year, full-time tutor contract became available at another TAFE campus, with the first year being offered as 'prior duties to working as a teacher'. Vince took that position and finished his degree. He was to go back as a tutor in the second year but he actively pursued a job as a replacement for a retiring teacher. He was successful and has been there ever since. This year he relieved the institute staff training and development officer for 2–3 months and was also responsible for helping teaching teams understand what was happening in training packages. As he had been working full-time for two years on contract he gained a tenured position 18 months ago, a move that was supported by the then director. He comments that he doesn't think that he falls into the 'typical TAFE teacher mould'. Vince has just finished a Masters degree in adult and tertiary pedagogy in education. He also holds a Bachelor of Education and a Certificate in Assessment and Delivery (a requirement for all TAFE teachers in his state). He now does the assessment of most trade teachers on the campus for this certificate.

He regards his tenacity as his major strength as he 'gets things done'. His on-site construction teaching team has an understanding of flexible modes of delivery and assessment—for example, portfolio, practical activities, exams, written assignments, evidence of pre-learning. Detailed records are required for this, and the administrative system, teachers believe, has had a meltdown and just

physically can't cope with the continuous changes in requirements. As there is a high turnover of administrative staff, teachers take over sorting out the paperwork problems. At the moment Vince has to decide whether he wants to move to an administrative role or stay in a teaching role. As the salaries are about the same he suspects he'll 'stay in the teaching stream'. He indicates that teaching is not just getting up in front of a class now—it is administrative, being a confessor, designing programs, assessing on site, liaising with industry, making registrations, achieving meaner rates, ensuring funding and managing teaching staff and administrative support as well.

Vince indicates that most of the team's work is with apprentices aged between 16 and 22 (although one is 54). There are also certificate 4 students aged 28–55 and building studies students aged 24–35. Most apprentices have Year 10, but some have Year 12. High levels, literacy and numeracy skills are not a necessity as the team looks at the whole person, teaches what they need and gets additional funded support where required. Those with high literacy and numeracy skills can be accelerated.

In his experience of dealing with students, split-mode delivery hasn't changed in two years but dealing with administration has. He notes that 'there are a lot more audit requirements than there used to be and although they are there to help us, when time is limited, our priority is that students come first before institute requirements'. The new training packages were also a challenge, but the team slotted them into existing programs that were working well. Flexible delivery has challenged the traditional concepts of teaching hours as they were understood. Some employers want total workplace delivery, and Vince comments that there are times when TAFE is not the best registered training organisation for them.

Wendy

Wendy's career has always been in education. She began as a high school teacher and stayed for about 12 years. She taught English and history and then became a member of the Board of English Theatre and an English subject master. Marriage and children brought career interruption (marriage was a 'dismissible offence' for a female) but, after the birth of her second child, she almost 'bluffed her way' into the education faculty of a major university. She taught on three-year contracts in a Diploma of Primary Education in language, arts, social sciences, as well as doing drama classes and practicum supervision. In 1989, when the university was going through a major restructure, a position in TAFE became available to teach Advanced Instructional Skills and pre-vocational courses. Six weeks after she began, college management decided that there would be no more pre-vocational courses. However, Wendy and some colleagues 'invented themselves a job as a fee-for-service arm'. They did this for three years, going out into industry before management decided this wasn't a teaching position. So two of them started a business studies program with no business qualifications (but 'rapidly acquired them'). From that point she went into project work, managing the flexible learning network and professional development programs sponsored by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), acting in the Educational Design and Development Manager role which is now her substantive position. Wendy had reached the status of Principal Teacher 1, which she was until she took the permanent role in 2000. She describes getting into teaching as a happy accident.

Wendy holds an 'elderly BA' and a Diploma of Education. She also has qualifications in speech and drama (was a private provider in the theatre for a while), holds a creative arts qualification from a major university, a Diploma of Management and a Diploma of Human Resource Management (to support business teaching), a Graduate Certificate of learning (in open and distance learning) plus technology courses. She indicates that she was either 'madly catching up' or 'trying to stay ahead'. She has thought about doing a masters' degree but has gone for breadth rather than depth. In her view her major strength is that she really enjoys teaching. She comments that in business classes you tend to get half and half early school leavers and older people at all different stages of their lives and she really enjoys the interelationship. She particularly likes working with mature students because discipline is not a problem. In her new role her work teams are Wendy's 'students'.

In the business studies courses students may be from the public service, labour market programs, government departments or industrial relations, or be women, the disadvantaged or electrical

apprentices (doing communications). The ages of day class learners range typically from 17–18 with 20% mature-aged students who are returning or retraining after life changes. There are very few mature-aged apprentices. In night classes students are much older and there is no typical background—many have degrees while others have poor literacy skills. Students gain networks, a toolbag of skills and ('more important than quals') political acumen and a capacity to look at things from other points of view. Some come out of the school system not feeling good about themselves, so TAFE can give them an opportunity to achieve success.

One of the biggest changes has been the latest enterprise agreement for contract and permanent teachers. After teachers have worked their allocated hours, they can do any additional time on casual rates and are doing very nicely financially. This was designed by management to even out the troughs and hills, but with the increasing flexibility of delivery there haven't been any hills and troughs. Wendy is concerned that there is a general devaluing of the VET sector. It is outcome and industry-driven but industry doesn't know where to 'herd it'! As a public provider, TAFE has a quality and social justice rather than a business focus but this is not the government agenda. TAFE teachers are holistic educators who do more than sign off on competencies. However, Wendy doesn't consider private providers as 'bogey men' and is confident there is a place for both. The frustration is in meeting both the needs of the client and requirements of ANTA and the bureaucracies.

Xavier

Xavier has worked for 14 years in TAFE and before that for eight years in Primary Industries in agriculture and horticulture. He joined TAFE through a beginning teacher program designed to attract people from industry. During the first two to three years recruits were trained on the job, attended two six-month blocks at a major university and were supported by college mentors. This qualification (Dip. Teach.) was later upgraded to a Bachelor of Teaching. While Xavier recognises this was a big investment for TAFE, he and other teachers came out with a sense of worth, a sense of being valued and with a professional ethic that in turn valued education. He compares this with the current situation in which teachers need to either already hold a degree or to get a casual teaching job and study 'off their own bat'. Xavier comments that he was a bit unusual in that he had a degree in applied science before he came into TAFE. He nominates his depth of experience as his major strength because it provides him with an armoury of strategies. Another strength is his deep commitment to keeping his industry contacts up to date. With people from industry in classes, he has to be 'cutting edge'—ahead of what students are doing at work. His specialty is chemicals and pesticides, an area where change has to occur.

His learners vary from experienced and mature-aged people (20+ through to 60) in night classes who are capable and highly motivated (some want the qualification, others just want the knowledge, some have a degree but need practical skills), to students in day classes (aged 17–18) who have a 'high school mentality' and tend not to do any work that is not being assessed. About 30% of daytime classes are mature-aged career change students but many students have special needs (learning difficulties, disadvantaged backgrounds, unemployment). These are now almost the average students. He also has trainees who do some of their training at TAFE. Courses include diploma, trade-level certificate and entry-level short horticultural courses. There are some fee-for-service courses for corporate customers. Delivery is tailored to meet needs of specific groups.

Xavier identifies a number of changes that have impacted on teaching. One is in recruitment and training policies. With the average age of TAFE teachers approaching 50 and no younger ones being recruited, there is no longer a balance in the workforce—the experienced and 'war-weary' are not being tempered by enthusiastic young teachers. In addition, contact time is being reduced, teachers are being asked to do more in less time with less money and with aging equipment and reduced services; for example, now not having a college bus for industry visits. In these circumstances what 'gives' is quality of delivery—there is no time to explain, practise and reinforce—and that affects a teacher's sense of worth. While there has been a continuing downsizing of teaching staff, the bureaucracy has grown to keep up with the increased level of tendering processes and record-keeping. Another change has been the introduction of the new apprenticeship scheme as opposed to the traditional four-year indentured apprenticeship. With the

change in entry levels for universities, TAFE is now taking 'the cut below'. Many of these students require more tutorial support and there has to be a re-evaluation of how topics are taught so as to tailor courses for them. About 50% do not have basic numeracy and literacy skills and teachers become involved in backing up support tutorials. Teachers need more time to achieve the same outcome with these students. When teachers leave they are replaced by casuals with the workplace trainers certificate who don't have the strategies and knowledge to problem solve. While Xavier's college has 'always been flexible' in delivery, now 'flexible' is used as a euphemism for less face-to-face teaching. Four curriculum changes have occurred in the last few years, the last being the training packages, but no additional time was allowed for preparing for this change.

The least satisfying part of his work is making compromises that he doesn't want to make. Xavier states clearly that his students are his priority and works within the principle that TAFE has a social obligation to serve the wider community.

Yvonne

Yvonne began her working life in junior and senior executive training at David Jones (a major city department store) and became a buyer, a position she held for ten years. She then studied music in Vienna for a year (which she found she wasn't suited to), then married, went to another state and was administration manager for a heavy equipment hire company. She again moved to another state and opened her own businesses, including a coffee lounge/restaurant, and also took over the administration and marketing for her husband's business (he was a designing engineer). She then became merchandising controller for a large company. At that time both Yvonne and her husband were ill and as they had young children, she decided on a complete career change so as to focus more on the children. She had wanted to be a teacher when younger, but family circumstances hadn't been right then. She decided on teaching home economics (she had retail and hospitality experience but there was nothing specifically in schools then along these lines). She holds a Bachelor of Education, a Diploma of Commerce ('there wasn't a degree in those days' but was later converted to a degree) and a Master of Education. Yvonne's interest is in learning for 'kids who haven't done well' and in apprenticeships. She comments that she really worked in 'VET' from the moment she began teaching in schools. She became an adviser in VET schooling and for two years was involved in introducing a school-to-work program across government and non-government schools which gave her a national perspective. She has given up opportunities for promotion because she wants to stay in teaching. She says that having run a small business helps with administration, management and with obtaining funding. Without that experience all the education and all the other experiences would not come together. She also acknowledges that specific content areas from industry experience have been helpful and that the underpinning sound educational base allows her to take a piece of research, pick out what she needs, and predict trends that she couldn't otherwise have done.

She comments that her learners don't fit the mould—that the school requires academic intelligence—but they do have strengths in other intelligences and by tapping into these they can be steered back into the academic stream. All applicants are interviewed by two people but not all can gain a place (there are 25 in Year 11 and 25 in Year 12). The most important criterion for acceptance into the course is motivation, not academic achievement. Parents are involved and a contract is signed. The teachers for the course are also selected on high levels of motivation. Students spend three and a half days at school, half a day in TAFE in industry-specific modules and one full day on work placement. At school they gain their underpinning knowledge through three non-negotiable subjects (English, maths and technology). There are three levels in each subject so they will all pass at what ever level they have studied. Other subjects are tourism and social and community studies that includes job readiness. Technology and assessments are integrated across all subject areas. Although students enter the course with depleted self-esteem, they work well in groups. They are mostly aged 16–17 with 15 and 18 at the extremes. There are some underachievers, some with English as a second language and others who have emotional problems blocking learning. There are also Aboriginal and Islander students. The impact of this course is that the success of these kids feeds into society in general. All students do a core skills test and a tertiary entrance application for the experience.

Yvonne explains that as the school is a VET provider, her job changes with legislation because the school falls under international standards and compliance. As a result of constant legislative change, changes from curriculum to training packages and from module to competency, there is much more administration in the VET area but she finds her small business training invaluable —'it isn't just education, there is so much more involved'. As a registered training organisation, the school has to set up and issue certificates of attainment for all levels of vocational education and training in the school. Liaison with TAFE is substantial and the costs involved and the funding system have changed. Because she pushes change it doesn't really impact on her—she's always looking for the next thing. This stems from her business experience where she constantly had to look for trends and opportunities. Yvonne enjoys the planning and the implementation but hates fighting for money.

Zac

Zac worked for 20 years in the Australian Defence Force in some instructional and supervisory roles and in recruitment. He says that it is probably because of this, together with his further education, that he is where he is today. He now works in a national training provider of 25 years standing. After retiring from the Defence Force he took a training role with the Department of Health (in health and safety) and another in a company in training individual staff. He found that many people were not accustomed to training and taking responsibility for their own actions, a very different experience from that of the Defence Force. Through contacts in education he eventually began working in the college where he is now. Initially he was an instructor in workplace training and assessment (train the trainer) and then branched out into other areas that used his practical skills. He brought in a system of regular instructor assessment as a tool for continual improvement and support, particularly in relation to different methods of delivery. This system is used in conjunction with student evaluations and surveys to monitor quality assurance. He then moved into a supervisory role and is now a director. He holds a Bachelor of Business (majoring in HRM), a Diploma in Workplace Training and Assessment, a Diploma in Human Resource Management, and is currently in a Masters program in education. Zac nominates his depth of experience, being able to use examples and stories, and the ability to interact positively with the students as strengths.

Zac's workplace attracts enrolments in both English and business. The English program includes a range of courses of 12, 24 or 36 weeks. The 36-week course will get students into certificate 4 subjects, and if they pass additional language tests, they can advance into diploma courses. International students have to achieve the required levels in English language tests, have an equivalent of Year 12 and be over 17 years of age. When students move from the English college to the business college, they do a compulsory module in English communication as a user-friendly approach to doing English. (Once students get into the business college they think they 'have finished' with English courses.) An advantage of this subject is that it can be used for articulation into university. Students graduate from the business college with an employability in two areas—administration and their own major. The college focusses on getting students jobs. For many local students the motivation is the job at the end, and for international students, it is usually articulation into university by way of English and business college. The age range is 17–25 on average, with a significant body of mature students from 30–45 (about 10%). Local students have Year 12 qualifications (a prerequisite) and many are regional students. The international interaction experience is very useful in the global business world.

Zac describes the major impact on his teaching as being the use of flexible delivery material. It has changed how people look at the process of teaching. This and the move to competency-based training have really impacted on his organisation that has a long history of traditional provision. There is a high volume of marking in flexible delivery where assessment cannot be done in class as part of the learning process.

He describes the most satisfying part of his job as being when a student's eyes light up, particularly the international students who have the additional challenge of working in a new language. It is also satisfying to see students achieve and progress. Zac says the least satisfying aspects are when he works very hard and doesn't get a result or has a student who is dissatisfied—these are complex situations and he says 'you know you've missed the boat'. Pressure and constraints on time are the

areas the least understood by others. He will be surprised if he isn't working online and in some distance programs in the future.

Private provision, in Zac's experience, is in a position to offer challenging courses for 48 weeks a year, whereas TAFE can't be as flexible. Zac's workplace allows an immediate start—'the here and now lets do it', giving students what they want when they want it.

Angus-Alistair

Angus-Alistair is now co-ordinating a program in a community college employment and training centre. He left school at 14 (school drove him mad) even though he was in an academic stream. He gained an apprenticeship in fitting and machining, worked as a diesel fitter and as a maintenance fitter, 'did a bit of training' before beginning work at an apprentices' training college where the apprentices were going from bench operations up to computer-operated machines. After eight years he moved to the Department of Industrial Relations as the training officer (assessing all apprenticeships and traineeships, disputes and wage investigations). At that point he moved interstate and went to university because he had 'all these small qualifications' but nothing formalised. He began in a bachelor in technology education program but transferred to adult and vocational teaching (AVT) with majors in AVT and literacy and numeracy. He then did some language and literacy teaching that led into some community work. When the contracts ran out he then started his own business in community training and sent a resume to his current workplace and subsequently began as a casual teacher in the literacy room. Twelve months ago he became a full-time training placement co-ordinator. Angus-Alistair regards his career history as 'a good ad' for lifelong learning. He has trade certificates, post-trade qualifications in hydraulics, train-the-trainer, small courses such as Transactional Analysis, Training by Objectives, Educational Psychology and Basic Psychology and 'a couple at a uni'. He is enrolled to start his masters next year. He was motivated by the problems that his peers had with literacy and numeracy, his experience of seeing the Skills Olympics and the high level that could be achieved, and decided to move into literacy and numeracy. He thinks his depth of work experience mixed with his qualifications is his strength. People tell him he has people skills.

His learners are a real cross section with diverse educational backgrounds. The workplace education literacy students were mostly from non-English speaking backgrounds but he was surprised at the low levels of literacy of some adults. The learners where he is now tend to be younger. In fact, some left school at 12 years of age in Year 7 while others left in Years 8, 9 and 10. Angus-Alistair has found that most people want to learn, given the opportunity. He has had learners (girls as well who are out of school for various reasons—one expelled for smoking!) pull a motor down and rebuild it and write up the procedures as they went. He uses whatever motivates the learners. He believes strongly in community education that provides an informal relaxed atmosphere for learners who have been failed by formal institutions. For this reason he wouldn't like to see all this training go back to TAFE. His students achieve self-awareness, respect for themselves and are treated as equals, and these are things that are hard to document when applying for funding.

Angus-Alistair nominates the biggest impact from workplace change as being the amount of paperwork. This is the unfunded part of the job—the weeks spent on researching and writing submissions. In addition, assessment is now more integrated and complex. The documenting of everything (the verification, mapping the area, the outcome, the number and types of assessments) is complex, requiring more time spent working at home. He wonders where the change really came from and whether it really benefits industry—is it a need?—or change for change sake? Another very big change has been online training with the challenge to get the resources together for open community access in a climate of funding cutbacks and a stated political agenda in his state to take registered training organisation status away from community organisations and 'push it back into TAFE'.

The most satisfying aspect of his work is seeing the learners succeed. The least satisfying aspects are the paperwork and having excellent trainers and not being able to guarantee continuity of work for them. The community sector is constantly losing good people.

Alicia-Betty

In 1993, Alicia-Betty became an educator and a workplace-training consultant with a private provider in the areas of personal development, communication, and career planning and development, working with the long-term unemployed. She continued in this role, running back-to-back programs until 1996 when she started working in the corporate sector. She became accredited through an institute which was part of an international consulting group focussed on personal development for personal efficiency. (She says she was a very organised person.) She made a decision to go full-time in a 'normal' job with a corporation as a trainer. She stayed in this position for a year and a half, and during that time managed a large training project, was an internal consultant and a project leader for training and did some facilitation. At the end of 1999 she went back into consulting and since then has focussed on certificate 4 for workplaces. In addition, she has done work with other providers, including some workplace training for TAFE. She won't continue with TAFE as she much prefers to work for private providers where she has more freedom to design and develop programs. She also trains group facilitators (for teams and groups), designs programs, and develops the trainers to run in-house programs and to use accelerated learning and training methodology and processes. She wants a high-quality product. The most satisfying aspect is 'making a difference'.

After completing a Bachelor of Commerce in Human Resources and Marketing she went into marketing and 'hated it'. She then became a store manager, went overseas for a year and a half and then took stock and looked at the pattern of what she was good at and what she enjoyed doing. The common thing in all her jobs had been training and that was what she liked doing—training and helping others. She was fascinated by how people learn and became interested in super-learning and found her own learning was enhanced. She recalls having had a photographic memory at school and losing it and then not knowing how to learn. She had to re-teach herself to learn and now her passion is how to help people learn and how to encourage lifelong learning. It is now not the content that interests her, it is the actual process of learning. She expresses concern about certificate 4 (Train the Trainer) as she wonders how it can set people up to be a trainer. She compares this with teachers of school children who train for four years. She says 'how can I teach an adult after a 4-day course?' This raises large questions for her. She completed a Certificate in Organisational Development because it interested her and she is now interested in doing a Master of Education degree which would rollover from the Graduate Certificate in Adult and Workplace Education that she was doing. She comments that there are many workplace trainers who are 'presenters', whereas she regards herself as a facilitator of leaning. She also says that she is goal-oriented, reflecting constantly on where she is and where she is going but at the same time is not afraid to change course.

Alicia-Betty describes her learners as being predominantly from the public sector (80%), with the remainder from the private sector. In 2000 the learners were more senior people (for example, senior advisers), whereas previously there has been a mixture. She runs some accredited and some non-accredited courses—working in a partnering relationship with one company also subcontracted from the Australian Centre for Work Education delivering Certificate 4 in Workplace Training. The learners are mostly young people with some 50–60-year-olds on a career shift later in life. Her learners and her work don't slot into set times and set semesters. She ascertains any formal training and experience that students have in the areas of the training before they start in a program so it can be tailored to suit. Learners from the public sector may be motivated by the courses being funded, but with others there is often a flow-on effect of returning students. For example, in 2001 Alicia-Betty is offering a course, Facilitation in Depth (advanced course), directly in response to requests for 'stepped' courses. Students sometimes require the course for work, others may 'put their hand up for anything that's offered' and still others have a real need for help.

She says there seems to be yearly change and modifications in the VET system. In private consulting most changes are in Alicia-Betty's control but in TAFE she doesn't have control or choice.

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research is Australia's primary research and development organisation in the field of vocational education and training.

NCVER undertakes and manages research programs and monitors the performance of Australia's training system.

NCVER provides a range of information aimed at improving the quality of training at all levels.

ISBN 1 74096 140 4 print edition
ISBN 1 74096 141 2 web edition

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

X	This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.
	This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").